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LIVES OF THE CONJURORS

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CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY, W.

THE

LIVES OF THE CONJURORS

BY

THOMAS FROST

AUTHOR OF "CIRCUS LIFE AND CIRCUS CELEBRITIES," "THE OLD SHOWMEN AND THE OLD LONDON FAIRS," ETC.

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PREFACE.

The present volume closes the series of works on the entertaining classes which I contemplated when writing *Circus Life and Circus Celebrities*, the greater part of which was written before *The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs* was commenced, though the publication of the latter work preceded that of the former. In embracing within the present volume the lives of the conjurors of every period and every country, while the record of shows and showmen is confined to London and the suburban districts, (which may now be said to embrace a circle of twenty miles across,) and that of circuses is limited to the United Kingdom, with a glance across the Atlantic, I have been influenced by considerations arising from the nature of the subjects, and concerning which it seems desirable to say a few words on the present occasion.

Modern conjuring receives so much illustration and elucidation from the similar exhibitions of antiquity and the middle ages that a relation of the lives and feats of conjurors, commencing with Neve, would have not only been as imperfect a record as was presented by Godwin, but have been

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deficient of the interest which is imparted to the subject by the light thrown upon the marvels exhibited by conjurors of our own day by the knowledge of those performed by the magicians of the ancient and mediæval worlds. For this reason, I have given the present work a more comprehensive character, in respect of time and place, than I gave its predecessors in the series, feeling confident that this mode of treating the subject will commend it to the approval both of the conjuring fraternity and the thousands whom they entertain.

It will be obvious, I think, that this method could not be adopted in relating the history of fairs, and of the shows of all kinds which attend them. Fairs and their amusements, from Seville to Nijni-Novgorod, and from St. Petersburg to Giurgevo, would have required several volumes for their description; and another reason for the non-production of a work so comprehensive was furnished by the impracticability of giving it European scope on the plan required for a description of the shows that excited the wonder or the risibility of the fair-goers of past centuries. Materials exist for the history of very few even of the British fairs, while the fairs formerly held in and around the metropolis may be regarded as fairly representative of the whole of them.

These considerations, and the limitation of my

record of shows and showmen to those who attended the old London fairs, are a sufficient answer to the critics who reminded me that the fairs of Bristol and Glasgow had escaped my observation,—that I had not mentioned David Prince Miller,—that I had forgotten Barnum when stating that no showman had ever published his memoirs, etc. In the treatment of circuses they did not operate, because the circuses in existence at any one period between the Channel and the Grampians may be counted on the fingers; while the number of equestrian companies that have at any time been temporarily located in the metropolis is so much smaller that the subject could not be satisfactorily treated within limits more contracted than the British shores.

Fewer omissions will, I think, be found in the present work than in its immediate predecessor, in which, as I did not aim at being the Geneste of equestrianism, it was unnecessary to record the name of every rider, acrobat, gymnast, etc., who ever performed in the arena of a circus. Even in that work, however, the critics have instanced only Keller, the exhibitor of *poses plastiques*, whom my researches have failed to discover in a circus. David Prince Miller they will find in his proper place, though he did not figure among the showmen at fairs which he never professionally attended.

I have said nothing concerning the manners and habits of conjurors, simply because there is nothing to be said. There are so few conjurors, as compared with circus performers, or members of the theatrical profession, that they do not contract those peculiarities of manner, language, and dress by which individuals of other classes of entertainers may almost invariably be distinguished. Performing singly, and each being (except occasionally in London or Paris) the only conjuror in the town in which he is temporarily located, they have few opportunities of association, and those peculiarities which are the product of gregariousness are, in consequence, not developed. The conjuror, again, is very seldom trained to the profession from his youth, as the majority of circus *artistes*, and not a few members of the theatrical profession are; and this being the case, as it has been with all the most eminent performers of legerdemain, they carry into the profession the habits and manners of the section of society in which they have been born. With this remark, I commit the following pages to the judgment of the public, trusting that their readers will find them as interesting as the entertainments which they chronicle.

T. FROST.

THE LIVES OF THE CONJURORS.

CHAPTER I.

Beginnings of the Black Art—Who the First Conjurors were—Apparitions of the Pagan Deities—Religious Mysteries of the Ancient World—How the Phantasms were Produced—Ancient Magic Mirrors—Corruption and Abolition of the Mysteries.

The investigation of the early history of the wonder-creating arts which have received the names of necromancy and magic carries us back to the infancy of science. That the priests of the old world should have been the first to exhibit those marvels which in modern times have become an over-popular amusement need not surprise us, since they alone, in the earliest ages, possessed the scientific knowledge and skill which were required for their production. As Egypt was the cradle of

the sciences, so it is in Egypt that we find the first instances of the practice of the arts by which the senses of the observer have been, from time immemorial, deluded and imposed upon.

That the practitioners of magic had attained a high degree of skill as early as the epoch of the Pharaohs is shown by the Biblical account of the wonders which they were able to display in competition with Aaron. We read in that remarkable narrative that "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." The trial of skill between the Hebrew and the Egyptian magicians was well contested at the outset, and in its progress must have been one of intense and growing interest to the people of both nationalities. When Aaron touched the water of the Nile with his rod, and the river became blood, "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments;" and when the Hebrew priest waved his wand over the waters of the land, and evoked a plague of frogs, "the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land

of Egypt." But they failed in their attempt to produce lice upon man and beast, and thereupon abandoned the contest.

The necromancers of the race of Israel became, at a later period, as well acquainted with the means of producing optical delusions as those of the heathen nations around them. The story of the raising of the spirit of Samuel by the witch of Endor, at the command of Saul, corresponds remarkably with the similar accounts of such apparitions preserved by Jamblichus. The witch saw "gods ascending out of the earth," and added, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle." The chronicler, evidently a firm believer in the supernatural character of the apparition, does not throw the faintest scintillation of light upon the *modus operandi*; but some illumination may be gained by comparing the vision with the similar appearances produced by the priests and magicians of the pagan world.

Pliny mentions that, in the temple of Herakles at Tyre, there was a pedestal made of a consecrated stone, "from which the gods rose." Asklepius was often exhibited to his worshippers, in his temple at Ephesus, in a similar manner; and the temple at Enguinum, in Sicily, was another place equally celebrated for such visions or apparitions,

by which the senses of the people were deluded and their minds subjected to priestly influence. Jamblichus informs us that the ancient magicians caused the gods to appear among the vapours disengaged by fire; and the sorcerer Maximus made the statue of Hecate laugh, while in the midst of the smoke of burning incense. We shall find smoke and vapour in the records of similar manifestations down to our own time.

Imperfect as are the accounts of these apparitions which have been preserved, we can trace in them the elements of an optical illusion. Their character is so admirably depicted in a passage of Damascius, quoted by M. Salverte, that there is no difficulty in determining the means by which they were produced. "In a manifestation which ought not to be revealed," he says, "there appeared on the wall of the temple a mass of light, which at first seemed to be very remote; it transformed itself, in coming nearer, into a face evidently divine and supernatural, of a severe aspect, but mixed with gentleness, and extremely beautiful. According to the institutions of a mysterious religion, the Alexandrians honoured it as Osiris and Adonis." Whether the magic lantern was known to the ancients is uncertain, the invention of that instrument being involved in doubt; but to some appliance of the kind this account evidently points.

The most remarkable exhibitions of this kind were given, however, in connection with the secret rites which were called mysteries, because they were reserved for the more virtuous and intelligent of the people, and could not be participated in without a solemn initiation and an engagement to secrecy. Except in Egypt, where the priests were philosophers, and taught in the latter capacity, to those at least who were mentally capacitated to receive and appreciate them, doctrines different to those which they instilled into the masses, the mysteries were under the direction of the State, represented in those of Eleusis by the *basileus*, who presided over their celebration, the priests filling only subordinate offices, and having no share in the direction of the rites and spectacles. This circumstance, together with their institution by the great legislators, the antagonism to the popular creed of the secrets revealed in them, and the countenance which they received from philosophers who rejected that creed, show that the mysteries were designed as a counterpoise to sacerdotal influence.

It appears from passages of the ancient works in which the mysteries are mentioned, that great circumspection was exercised in the admission of aspirants, all being excluded who were not free-

born citizens of the State in which they were celebrated, and of irreproachable character. Originally, none but princes, generals, and the priests were admitted to the Isiac mysteries, unless when an exception was made in favour of some distinguished foreign legislator or philosopher, as in the case of Pythagoras; and Ezekiel says that they were celebrated in the temple at Jerusalem by "seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel." During the declension in repute of the Eleusinian mysteries, all persons who presented themselves for initiation were admitted, except slaves and those whom the Greeks termed barbarians; but in the first ages of the institution they were limited to citizens of Athens and their wives.

The mysteries were not celebrated everywhere, but only in such places as were especially sacred to the divinity upon whose worship they had been engrafted; and when the gods of one nation were adopted by another, according to the intercommunity of worship which prevailed in the middle and latter ages of paganism, the mysteries were not always adopted along with the public rites. The worship of Dionysus, under the name of Bacchus, was established in Rome long before the introduction of the mysteries associated with it.

These seem to have been identical with those of Orpheus, celebrated by the Thracians. The Serapic and Isiac mysteries were introduced into Italy during the middle period of the empire.

It appears from Ezekiel (chap. 8) that the Isiac mysteries had been introduced at Jerusalem in the time of that prophet, whose description of them agrees, so far as it goes, with the accounts which have come down to us from the Greek writers. Plutarch tell us that the Egyptian temples "in one place enlarge and extend into long wings and fair open aisles; in another sink into dark and secret subterranean vestries:" and Ezekiel describes the Isiac mysteries as being celebrated in a secret subterranean within the temple. Concerning these mysteries, which were the oldest of which any account has been preserved, and were originally celebrated only at Memphis, much information may be gathered from the *Metamorphosis* of Apuleius, a Platonist philosopher of the time of Severus. Whether this unique and curious romance was written before or after the accusation of sorcery against which the author so ably defended himself before the pro-consul of Africa is not certainly known; but the hypothesis that it was written afterwards receives strong support from the fact that his accusers did not refer to it, which, from the

many passages which they might have quoted from it in support of the charge, they would scarcely have failed to have done if it had then been written.

Apuleius stated in his defence, that he had been initiated into almost all the mysteries, and in the celebration of some of them had borne the most distinguished offices. The knowledge thus acquired is dimly shadowed forth in the *Metamorphosis*, his oath of secrecy preventing a fuller revelation. The hero of the story is a young man addicted to profligacy and magic, and who, by the use of an unguent received by mistake from the female attendant of a sorceress, and by which he expects to be transformed into an owl, is metamorphosed instead into an ass. In this form, he endures much suffering, but Isis, in answer to his prayers, reveals to him in a dream the means by which the magical transformation may be reversed. Having regained his proper form, he is initiated in the mysteries of Isis, and thereafter lives a virtuous and happy life.

The Egyptian mysteries were the most famous until they were eclipsed by those of Demeter, celebrated every fourth year by the Spartans and Cretans, and every fifth year by the Athenians. Concerning these more is known than of any other of the mysteries; but they all appear to have had

a considerable resemblance to each other, as well in the secrets revealed as in the mode of their revelation. When the candidates for initiation had performed the preliminary rites,—when they had bathed in the sea, and put on robes of white linen, symbolical of their repentance of their sins,—when they had taken the oath of secrecy,—they were ushered by night into a dark vault, there to await the moment when the veil should be withdrawn which policy had drawn around the national worship.

Darkness was as necessary to the exhibition of the pagan mysteries as to the representation of the dissolving views at the Polytechnic; and it served besides to stimulate curiosity and inspire awe. Euripides makes Dionysus say, that the mysteries were celebrated by night, because there is in darkness a peculiar solemnity, which fills the mind with religious awe. While the aspirants stood in a dense throng, absorbed in curiosity, wonder, and awe, no sound broke the solemn stillness—no glimmer of light irradiated the profound gloom. All at once lightning flashed athwart the gloom, and thunder rolled heavily through the subterranean chamber. The awe of the assembled aspirants increased to a vague terror. Again the lightning flashed, more vividly than before; and then all was

dark again, and seemed darker for the momentary illumination.

A pause of awe-inspiring silence succeeded, and then a faint light was discernible at the farther end of the mystic chamber. Gradually that faint glimmer increased until the wall seemed a curtain of light. Then the hierophant sang one of the hymns attributed to Orpheus, and of which only a fragment of one has been preserved; and upon the illuminated wall or curtain appeared that phantasmagorial procession of the fabled divinities of the national creed which is alluded to by several ancient writers. Proclus says that "the initiated meet many things of multiform shapes and species, which show the first generation of the gods." Dion Chrysostom speaks of "a certain mystic dome, excelling in beauty and magnificence, where the initiated sees many strange sights, and hears in the same manner a multitude of voices,—where darkness and light alternately affect his senses, and a thousand other uncommon things present themselves before him."

Celsus gives a similar description of the shows introduced in the Bacchic mysteries; and Pletho, speaking of the Mithraic mysteries, says "phantasms of a canine figure, and other monstrous shapes and appearances," were presented before the initiated. Apuleius states that the celestial and infernal

deities all passed in review before the spectators, and that a hymn was sung to each by the hierophant; and allusions to these spectacles may be found in the works of Claudian, Lucian, and Themistius. As all the divinities and semi-divinities of Olympus and Tartarus passed slowly before the wondering spectators, the chant of the hierophant informed them that all those stories of the gods which constituted the vulgar belief were mere imaginings of the poets, and proclaimed the power and glory of the One True God.

That this was the teaching of the State in the mysteries is indicated by numerous passages in the ancient writers, as well as by the fragment of one of the Orphcic hymns preserved by Clemens, who says that the poet, "after he had opened the mysteries, and sang the whole theology of idols, recants all he has said and introduces truth." The hymn, in literal prose, is as follows:—"I will declare a secret to the initiated; but let the doors be closed against the profane. Attend carefully to my song, for I shall speak of important truths. Suffer not, therefore, the former prepossessions of your mind to deprive you of that happy life which the knowledge of these mysterious truths will procure you. But look on the Divine Nature, incessantly contemplate it, and govern well the mind

and the heart. Go on in the right way, and see the Sole Ruler of the world. He is One, and of himself alone; and to that One all things owe their being. He operates through all, and was never seen by mortal eyes, but himself sees everything."

As Varro observes, in a fragment preserved by Augustine, "there were many truths which it was not advantageous to the State should be generally known, and many things which, though false, it was expedient that the people should believe; and therefore the Greeks veiled their mysteries in the silence of their sacred enclosures." Pythagoras, who was initiated in the mysteries of Dionysus, as well as in those of Isis, says, as quoted by Jamblichus, that he was taught in them the unity of the First Cause; and Chrysippus says, "that it is a great privilege to be admitted to the mysteries, wherein are delivered right and just notions concerning the gods, and which teach men to comprehend their nature."

Plane and concave mirrors are supposed to have been the principal instruments by which the heathen gods were made to appear in the manner which has been described. It has been clearly shown by various writers that the ancients made use of mirrors of silver, steel, and an alloy of copper and tin, similar

to those now used for reflecting specula. It is probable, from a passage in Pliny, that glass mirrors were made at Sidon; but it is obvious that, unless the objects presented to them were illuminated by a very strong light, the images which they gave must have been very faint and imperfect. The silver mirrors, which were commonly used, and which are superior to those made of any other metal, were, therefore, probably those most generally employed by the ancient magicians.

Aulus Gellius mentions a property of the ancient mirrors which has been a source of considerable perplexity to his commentators. He says that there were specula which gave no images of objects in some places, but recovered their property of reflection when placed in another. Salverte thought that Aulus Gellius was not sufficiently acquainted with the matter, and was mistaken in his hypothesis that the phenomenon depended on the place, instead of the position, of the mirror; but, as Sir David Brewster observes, in his admirable *Letters on Natural Magic*, "this criticism is obviously made with the view of supporting an opinion of his own, that the property in question may be analogous to the phenomenon of polarised light, which, at a certain angle, refuses to suffer reflection from particular bodies. If this idea has any foundation, the mirror

must have been of glass, or some other body not metallic; or, to speak more correctly, there must have been *two* such mirrors, so nicely adjusted not only to one another, but to the light incident upon each, that the effect could not possibly be produced but by a philosopher thoroughly acquainted with the modern discovery of the polarisation of light by reflection. Without seeking for so profound an explanation of the phenomenon, we may readily understand how a silver mirror may instantly lose its reflecting power in a damp atmosphere, in consequence of the precipitation of moisture upon its surface, and may immediately recover it when transported into drier air."

The plane mirror is one of the simplest instruments of optical illusion, and its use probably preceded that of the concave mirror. Its applicability to the purposes of the magician arises from the singular fact that, if two persons take up a mirror and one of them places himself as much on one side of a line perpendicular to the centre of it, as the other does on the other side, they each see each other reflected on it, but not themselves. Therefore, if an apartment be divided by two partitions placed at right angles to each other, and a person stand on one side of one partition, and look through an opening in the partition facing him, at

about five feet from the floor, at a mirror placed behind it, at an angle of forty-five degrees to the partition, he will see not himself, but any person or figure placed at the corresponding point on the other side of the partition which divides them. The effect of this and similar illusions is greatly increased when the figures exhibited are illuminated by a strong light, and the apartment in which the spectators stand is darkened.

But, however skilfully plane mirrors may be combined, the illusions produced by them are less effective than those produced by the use of an elliptical concave mirror and a large lens, the former being so disposed that any object placed in one focus of the ellipse is shown in an inverted form in the other focus. If the apparatus is properly adjusted, the image appears to be suspended in the air, so that, the figure and the mirror being concealed from the spectators, the effect must appear almost supernatural. To effect this illusion, the figure is placed before the mirror, on a level with its lower edge, and a diminished and inverted image being produced in the other focus, a large lens is placed between this image and the transparent screen or curtain upon which the image is to be shown in the natural position. If the figure is to be exhibited of the natural size,

the lens should magnify the image in the same proportion as the mirror diminishes the figure.

Sir David Brewster observes, in the work before quoted, that "those who have studied the effects of concave mirrors of a small size, and without the precautions necessary to ensure deception, cannot form any idea of the effect produced by this class of optical apparitions. When the instruments of illusion are themselves concealed; when all extraneous lights but those which illuminate the real object are excluded; when the mirrors are large and well polished and truly formed, the effect of the representation on ignorant minds is altogether overpowering; while even those who know the deception, and perfectly understand its principles, are not a little surprised at its effects. The inferiority in the effects of a common concave mirror to that of a well-arranged exhibition is greater even than that of a perspective picture hanging in an apartment to the same picture exhibited under all the imposing accompaniments of a dioramic representation."

The corruption and perversion of the mysteries from their original purpose led at length to their abolition. The mysteries of Dionysus ceased to be celebrated long before those of Demeter, for their suppression in Greece is mentioned by Cicero,

in whose time, and long afterwards, the latter were celebrated in their original purity. The mysteries of Demeter, whose worship had been introduced in Italy at a very early period in the name of Ceres, were regulated anew by Adrian. Valentinian, when he undertook the amendment of the laws and institutions of the empire, determined to suppress the mysteries, on account of the abuses and corruptions which had crept into them: but when orders to that effect were sent to the pro-consuls, Prætextatus, who then governed Greece in that capacity, reported that the suppression of the Eleusinian mysteries would cause the Greeks to live henceforth "a comfortless, lifeless life," and might be expected to result in serious disorders. In consequence of this representation, the mysteries of Demeter were excepted from the imperial edict, on the condition that those who regulated and presided over their celebration should undertake to restore their original purity and order. The reprieve was only temporary, however, and in the reign of the elder Theodosius the Eleusinian mysteries were suppressed by an imperial edict.

CHAPTER II.

The Secular Practice of Magic among the Ancients—Zoroaster and the Magi—Wondrous Stories of the Greek Magicians—Separation of the Soul from the Body—Simon Magus—An Ancient Fire-king—Animated Statues—Transformation—The Flower Trick known to the Ancients—The Magic Sickle—Elymas, the Sorcerer—Apollonius of Tyana—The Oracle of Abonotica.

The care that was taken by the sacerdotal order to conserve to themselves all the scientific knowledge of their age could not prevent inquiry and discovery on the part of the more acute intellects among the secular classes. The phenomena of the universe could not be concealed from observation, and, though they were to the masses only sources of wonder, the more active minds reasoned as well as observed, and, rejecting the cosmogonic fables of the poets and the priests, sought for their causes in natural laws. Philosophy soon trod close on the

heels of priestcraft, though the professors of both had for centuries but a feeble glimmer upon their minds of the light that was one day to illuminate the moral world.

The ignorance and credulity of the early generations of mankind afforded a strong temptation to the vain and unprincipled among the first students of science to pretend to supernatural power, while they caused it to be attributed to many who would have been content to be regarded simply as investigators of the mysteries of nature. Hence, throughout the ancient world, philosophy and magic were twin sisters, and were often mistaken for each other. The words magic and magician are said, indeed, to be derived from the title of Magus, applied to the Persian philosopher, Zoroaster, and the appellation of Magi or Magians, borne by his disciples.

Very little information has come down to us concerning the earliest of the magicians to whom that character is assigned by ancient authors. Tiresias, a blind man, who lived about the time of the Theban war, is said to have raised the dead by magical arts, and to have launched terrific menaces against the spirits whom he invoked when they were tardy in executing his commands. Abaris, a Scythian, whose epoch is variously stated, is also mentioned as a reputed magician.

Magical powers were attributed to the philosopher Pythagoras, who was perhaps not unwilling to possess the influence and distinction which he thus acquired. He is known to have studied astronomy and medicine in his native island of Samos, and afterwards to have travelled into Asia, and resided many years in Egypt. On his return to Samos, he fell under the displeasure of the tyrant, Polycrates, and removed to the south of Italy, where he formed a new school of philosophy, and passed the remainder of his life. One of his doctrines was the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, which, if it be true that he visited India, may have been derived from the Gymnosophists. He enforced his teaching of this theory by pretended personal experience, asserting that he remembered having fought at the siege of Troy, and been slain by Menelaus.

Many strange stories are told by ancient authors in confirmation of the magical powers which he was supposed to possess. He is said to have once met some fishermen on the coast between Sybaris and Crotona, and offered to tell them the exact number of the fish in their net. The fishermen, who did not know him, undertook to do whatever he told them, if he could do so; upon which he told them the number correctly, and commanded them to let

the fish escape into the sea. The men obeyed, and then received from the philosopher full payment for the haul they had abandoned.

On another occasion he encountered a bear, the ravages of which among their flocks had been a source of much loss and anxiety to the Daunians, whom he astonished by stroking the animal, and feeding it with maize and acorns. After enjoining it never to injure any living creature again, he parted from it, and the bear was never known to eat animal food afterwards. There is a somewhat similar story of an ox, which he found eating beans in a field near Tarentum, but which, on his whispering into its ear an injunction to abstain from beans, never touched pulse afterwards, and was known for years as the sacred ox of Pythagoras. Even more wonderful than this is the story of the eagle which he called down from its flight, and which is said to have alighted upon his shoulder, and suffered him to caress it.

One of the powers most commonly pretended to by the ancient Greek magicians was that of separating the soul from the body during life, as Shelley represents that of Ianthe to have been freed by the touch of Queen Mab, when

> It stood
> All beautiful in naked purity,

The perfect semblance of its bodily frame,
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace.
Each stain of earthliness
Had passed away: it re-assumed
Its native dignity, and stood
Immortal amid ruin.
Upon the couch the body lay
Wrapt in the depth of slumber:
Its features were fixed and meaningless.
Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet performed
Its natural functions.

Epimenides is the first who is mentioned as having possessed this power, but we are not asked to believe of him, or of others who are said to have possessed it, that the spirit and its mortal frame were visible at the same time, as those of Ianthe are pictured by the poet. Herodotus tells us of Aristeas, a native of the little island of Proconnessus, that he one day fell down, as if dead; but, on the return of his family to the room in which he had fallen, and from which they had hurried to procure assistance, he had disappeared. A traveller who had just arrived from Cyzicus met him at the same moment at the ferry. Seven years afterwards he returned to his native island, but again disappeared in the same mysterious manner as before. There seems nothing remarkable in these

disappearances, which the police of modern times can match with scores of similar instances; and we may dismiss as fiction the story of the re-appearance of Aristeas, three hundred and forty years afterwards, at Metapontum, and his final flight in the form of a crow.

Unless we suppose that Aristeas was the prototype of the mystery-creating gentlemen of the present day, who disappear from their wonted circles for secret reasons, to turn up again months or years afterwards, it must be conceded that he was an inferior performer to Hermodorus, who simulated death, and pretended that his soul had, during the trance, visited distant places, of which he gave his friends detailed accounts, the accuracy of which they were probably unable to test. It is recorded by an ancient author that his body was burned during one of these trances, and that his soul afterwards returned, to find that its material habitation had been destroyed in its absence. What it did in this distressing and unparalleled situation we are not told.

Concerning Simon Magus, who, as we read, in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. viii. ver. 9), "used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one," Clemens of Alexandria and Anastasius, a monk of the

convent at the foot of Mount Sinai, have recorded many extraordinary particulars. These writers inform us that he could render himself invisible, pass through rocks and mountains, throw himself from precipices, and into blazing fires, without sustaining any injury, fly through the air like a bird, transform himself into the semblance of various animals, and do many more of those wonderful acts which "must be seen to be believed." Some of these feats are not to be regarded with absolute incredulity, however, whatever halo of the marvellous may be diffused around them by the superstitious credulity of a dark age. The sorcerer of Samaria may have been rendered invisible by means similar to those by which Mrs. White, *alias* Miss Katie King, imposed upon the deluded believers in Spiritualism; and withstood fire by the same means as Chabert, Josephine Girardelli, and other performers of fiery feats in modern times.

Many other marvels are related of Simon by the monkish chroniclers of old world wonders. He could animate statues, transform himself into the semblance of a sheep, a goat, or a serpent, and cause furniture and domestic utensils to move, and plants to spring up whenever he pleased. Truly, "there is no new thing under the sun," since the sorcerer of Samaria practised table-turning, and

performed the flower-trick of the Indian conjurors, in the time of the Apostles. He is also said to have made a sickle which, wielded by an invisible hand, performed twice as much work as could be done in the same time by a reaper of mortal mould. Strange figures attended him wherever he went, and were said to be spirits which had departed from the forms they had once tenanted.

Clemens says that the unworthy motive by which Simon was animated in pretending to become a Christian, and which prompted him to offer money to the Apostles for the power of curing the sick by laying his hands on them, was the desire to be able to achieve by the mere will the wonders which he had hitherto performed by means of incantations and mystical ceremonies. He may have been either a self-deluded believer in his own supernatural powers, who regarded the Apostles as adepts of a higher order; or he may have supposed them to be impostors of his own class, practising by methods unknown to him. It is difficult, in this and many other instances, to determine how much the ancient magicians were themselves blinded by superstition, and how near they approached to the modern wonder-workers of the Polytechnic and the Egyptian Hall.

Concerning Elymas no more is known than we

read in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. xiii.); but his connection with Sergius Paulus argues him a magician of greater repute than the unnamed professors of "curious arts" who burned their books, as recorded in a subsequent chapter of that history.

Apollonius of Tyana has been reckoned among the magicians of the ancient world, but there is little known concerning him that warrants his inclusion. His repute as a professor of the Black Art rests chiefly upon the story that, having vainly warned his friend Menippus not to marry a beautiful woman by whom he had been fascinated, he went to the wedding feast, and, after telling the bridegroom that everything which he beheld was unreal, caused the guests and the banquet to vanish, leaving him alone with his astonished friend and the trembling bride. The lady resisted his power only for a time, for she too vanished, after confessing that she was a vampire.

During the prevalence at Ephesus of a terrible pestilence, he denounced to a crowd of the inhabitants of that city a decrepit old beggar as an enemy of the gods, and the cause of the visitation from which Ephesus was suffering. The beggar was thereupon stoned to death with so much vigour that he was buried under a mound of the missiles hurled at him by his infuriated assailants; but

upon the stones being removed, the corpse was found to have disappeared, or rather to have been transformed into a large black dog.

Apollonius afterwards went to Rome, where he was accused of conspiring with Nerva against the emperor, Domitian; but his innocence of the charge was established upon his trial, and he was liberated. He was ordered not to quit Rome; but he disappeared, and, as he was seen at Puteoli immediately afterwards, he was supposed to have used magical arts for the achievement of his evasion. He returned to Ephesus, where a life which extended to nearly a hundred years reached its end.

The last of the heathen magicians of this period was Alexander of Abonotica, in Paphlagonia. This man, who was of very humble origin, but of imposing appearance, and fruitful in the resources of artifice, had, for some purpose which the authors who have mentioned him do not acquaint us with, made a journey into Macedonia, and procured, in the neighbourhood of Pella, a serpent of unusual size. On his return to his native town, he announced the coming advent of Asklepius, and, after a sufficient interval to allow the rumour to spread, led a wondering and expectant crowd into the enclosure of a temple, where he produced from

the moat a goose's egg, into which he had previously introduced a young serpent. On his reverentially breaking the shell, the little reptile wriggled out, and coiled about his fingers as he held it up to the gaze of the wonder-stricken crowd, who at once jumped to the conclusion that the god of medicine was incarnate in the serpent, and that their fellow-citizen was a prophet.

This was only the first step in a scheme which Alexander had devised for profiting by the superstitious credulity of his countrymen. He bore the serpent to his house, and soon afterwards announced that Asklepius would answer the questions of all who might resort to him for advice or information. A crowd of inquirers rushed to consult the oracle, and were received by Alexander with the serpent which he had brought from Macedonia coiled about his neck, and a mask of a human face fitted to its head. At his ordinary *séances*, the questions of inquirers were written and enclosed in a sealed envelope; and the responses were delivered a few days afterwards, in the same envelope, with the seal apparently unbroken. But there were also special *séances*, at which *vivâ voce* responses were made by an assistant in another room, through the medium of a speaking tube, so arranged that the answers seemed to proceed from the mouth of the serpent.

This seems to have been one of the best contrived of the impostures of the secular magicians of ancient times, though it must be admitted to gain in the comparison by the circumstantiality with which it has been related. The palm would perhaps have to be awarded to Simon Magus if the marvels which that clever Samaritan is said to have performed had been as fully related, and upon as good authority. A little more information concerning his animated statues, his magic sickle, and his instantaneous production of plants would be very interesting.

We learn from this survey of the ancient practice of the Black Art, that the Asiatic magicians were more skilful than those of Greece; and that the secular practitioners, though some of them attained a remarkable degree of proficiency, never rivalled the priests in those optical illusions which made the temples of Memphis and Eleusis famous all over the ancient world. These points of difference are readily explicable. Asia was the cradle of the human race, and the practice of magic arose from the observation of natural phenomena as naturally as that of astrology from the study of the starry heavens. The priests caught the first glimmerings of the light of science, and had the advantage of their sacerdotal character in meeting

the competition of rivals who did not possess it.

The priests had, moreover, another great advantage in having such imposing and admirably contrived media for the exhibitions of their skill as the vast temples of antiquity, with their dimly lighted halls, their dark recesses, and their subterranean vaults and passages. Only in large and specially contrived buildings could those optical and acoustical illusions be exhibited which have been described in the preceding chapter. The scientific apparatus of those days was much more cumbrous than the instruments and appliances of modern times; and, indeed, it was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that the conjuror obtained, in the imperfect magic lantern of Kircher, a means of imposing upon the senses of the wondering spectators which could be conveniently carried about, and fitted up in any building wherever there might be a prospect of an appreciative gathering and corresponding gains.

CHAPTER III.

Merlin, the Enchanter—The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan—Optical Illusion shown by Santabaren—Brazen Head of Silvester II.—Lightning Produced by Gregory VII.—The Brazen Head of Bishop Greathead—Michael Scot—Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay—Story of the Brazen Head—Competition with Vandermast, the German Conjuror—Persecution of Bacon by the Pope—Albert Groot—Raymond Lully—Zeito, the Bohemian Conjuror.

The knowledge of the Black Art, as what we understand by magic was long deemed to be, was carried to Italy by Greek and Egyptian professors, sacerdotal and secular, and thence spread gradually over the whole of Europe. The Merlin of legendary lore is the first British magician who is mentioned by name, but he probably gained his great renown by surpassing his predecessors of the Celtic race; for other enchanters are said to have been consulted by Vortigern before Merlin was known, and it is

probable that, as in the case of some other famous conjurors of the dark ages, tradition has associated with his name some of the wonder-creating feats of his predecessors and contemporaries.

The earliest mention of Merlin occurs in the chronicles written in the eleventh century, and it should not surprise us to find, in records which so largely mingle fiction with facts, that the slight foundation afforded by the little that is really known about the enchanter is in danger of being crushed and buried under the superstructure of romance which has been raised upon it by tradition and the minstrels. It is a difficult task, at this time of day, to separate even a few grains of fact from such a mass of fiction; but, on the principle that there is no smoke without fire, we may accept as truth the statement that Merlin was born at Carmarthen, acquired the repute of a great magician, and was often consulted by Vortigern and his successors.

The story of his life, as told by the monkish chroniclers of the eleventh century, is less brief and more wonderful. We are told that Vortigern, when defeated by the Saxon invaders of the country, consulted certain enchanters, who advised the construction of a great tower, which should defy the attacks of the enemy. In accordance with this

advice, the tower was commenced; but it was found every morning that the work of the preceding day had been unavailing, the whole having sunk into the earth during the night. In this dilemma, Vortigern again had recourse to the enchanters, who were probably at their wits' ends; for, after conferring together, they informed the king that the foundations of the tower must be cemented with the blood of a human being who had been born without the agency of a human father.

It must have been calculated that this condition could not be secured; but Vortigern caused inquiries to be made for such a prodigy all through Britain, and they resulted in the discovery, at Carmarthen, of a man of reputed supernatural paternity, who was immediately hurried to the British camp. This was Merlin, who, on being taken before Vortigern, who must have been curious concerning a being so exceptional, availed of the opportunity to assure the king that the enchanters knew nothing about the matter, and that the real cause of the subsidence of the tower works was the existence beneath the foundations of a subterranean lake, in which lived two dragons, whose nightly conflicts produced disturbances of the earth above their retreat.

According to the legend, the truth of Merlin's statement was tested by excavating, when the won-

derful lake was discovered, and the dragons destroyed. Merlin not only saved his life, but became from that time the chief adviser of Vortigern, and afterwards of his successors, Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon. Having studied magic, he was able to perform many wonderful works; for, even at a much later period, a bridge could not be built across a ravine—as at Aberystwith—without being regarded by the ignorant and superstitious masses as the work of the devil. Merlin had the credit in after ages of having caused the enormous stones composing the Druidical circles on Salisbury Plain to be brought through the air from Ireland by his familiar demons.

His magical arts were not always exerted in a good cause, however, for he is said to have transformed Uther Pendragon into the semblance of the Duke of Cornwall, in order to enable him to seduce the latter's wife. The duke being afterwards slain in battle, his widow became the wife of Uther. There is that retributive justice which is more often found in romance than in reality in the story of Merlin's passion for the Lady of the Lake, a supernatural beauty of the Naiad kind, who figured in the masque with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Elizabeth on the occasion of her visit to Kenilworth Castle.

Merlin, we are told, had conceived the design of surrounding Carmarthen with a wall of brass, the sections of which were to be forged by demons, who worked incessantly beneath the earth. His passion for the nymph of the lake prompting him to journey into Warwickshire, he enjoined the demons not to desist from labour during his absence, and rode off—unless, indeed, he flew on a dragon, as might be expected from so potent a master of the Black Art. Arrived at Kenilworth, the Lady of the Lake showed him a vault, with which some tremendous mystery was connected, and taught him the spell by which its long-closed portals might be opened. He entered; the doors closed behind him with a fearful clang, and, as they would not yield again to the same charm, the vault proved his grave. The demons continued to labour at their subterranean forge, but Merlin never returned; and it was believed for centuries afterwards that the sound of their hammers could be heard in the still hours of the night.

There is an interval of nearly three hundred years between Merlin and the next great magician, the impostor Haschem, commonly called Mokanna, from the veil of silver gauze which he constantly wore to conceal his diabolically ugly features. As the leader of many thousands of deluded fanatics,

who regarded him as an incarnation of Allah, he raised a great ferment in the province of Khorasan in the year 785; but his claim to be regarded as a magician rests upon a marvel which he is said to have worked when defeated by the Moslems, and forced to retreat into the town of Neksheb, and which obtained for him the name of Sazendah Mah, or the moon-maker.

While shut up in that town, where he eventually committed suicide, he kept alive the hopes of his deluded followers for two months by assuring them that it was written in the Book of Fate, that the star of Islam should wane when the moon should rise every night from a well in the town, which was esteemed holy; and causing a luminous body, having the appearance of the full moon, to rise every night from the well, thus encouraging the belief that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled. The illusion forms a striking incident in Moore's story of *The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan*:—

> "They turned, and, as he spoke,
> A sudden splendour all around them broke,
> And they beheld an orb, ample and bright,
> Rise from the Holy Well, and cast its light
> Round the rich city and the plain for miles,—
> Flinging such radiance o'er the gilded tiles

Of many a dome and fair-roofed imaret,
As autumn suns shed round them when they set."

D'Herbelot, who gathered from Oriental sources the particulars which he gives of the impostor's career and fate, throws no light upon the mode in which the mock-moon was produced, and hazards no conjecture on the subject.

Among the more remarkable examples of the necromancy of the middle ages, the deception practised upon the Greek Emperor, Basil, by the patriarch, Theodore Santabaren, must be mentioned. It is said that the emperor, inconsolable for the loss of his son, had recourse to the patriarch, who had the repute of a worker of miracles. The ecclesiastical magician exhibited to him the image of his beloved son, magnificently attired; the youth rushed towards him, threw himself into his arms, and immediately disappeared.

Salverte observes that this illusion, which escaped the researches of Godwin, could not have been wrought by the aid of a youth who resembled the young prince, and was attired like him. The existence of such a person, betrayed by so remarkable a resemblance, and by the trick of the exhibition, could not have failed to be discovered and denounced, even if we could explain the vanishing

of the image at the moment of the embrace for which the fond father longed. Basil must have been shown the aerial image of a picture of his son, which, as it was moved nearer to the concave mirror, seemed to advance into his arms. The powers of the concave mirror have been frequently availed of in this manner in exhibiting the image of an absent or deceased friend or relative. For this purpose, a strongly illuminated picture or bust is placed before the mirror, which, by the aid of a lens, gives a distinct aerial image of the figure. If the background is blackened, so that there is no light about the figure but what falls on it, the effect is the more striking and complete.

As in all exhibitions with concave mirrors the size of the aerial image is to that of the real object as their distances from the mirror, the magician may, by varying the distance of the object, increase or diminish the size of the image. In doing this, however, the distance of the image from the mirror is changed at the same time, so that it quits the position most suitable for its exhibition. This defect may be removed by simultaneously changing the place both of the mirror and the object, so that the image may remain stationary, expanding itself gradually to a gigantic size, or growing smaller by degrees until it vanishes.

Benno charges several of the mediæval Popes with sorcery, but there were only two of the successors of Peter by whom magic can fairly be said to have been practised, and the grounds of the allegation are slight even in their cases. Silvester II., who died in 1003, was originally a monk of Fleury, in Burgundy, and then bore the name of Gerbert. Love of science, and a desire to study Arab lore, led him to Cordova, where he remained several years, and attained great proficiency in astronomy and geometry. To him is ascribed the introduction into Europe of the Arabic numerals. Leaving Cordova for Paris, he was appointed by Hugh Capet preceptor to his son, Robert, and afterwards Archbishop of Rheims; but, a dispute arising as to the validity of this preferment, he resigned it, and went to Germany, where he found a friend and patron in Otho III. Subsequently he became Archbishop of Ravenna, and another step seated him on the Pontifical throne.

The practice of magic by this fortunate monk rests on the authority of William of Malmesbury, who credits him with a degree of proficiency in the Black Art that enabled him to make many discoveries of hidden treasure, and to construct a brazen head, which answered the queries addressed to it, like the Sphinx which Stodare exhibited a few years

ago at the Egyptian Hall. On one occasion, we are told, he obtained access, by magical arts, to an enchanted palace underground. Its splendour exceeded that of any earthly palace, but it disappeared in a puff of smoke on being touched.

The other triple-crowned magician was Gregory VII., who also studied astrology. Mornay says that he could produce thunder and lightning by shaking his arm. Something of this kind is mentioned by Roger Bacon in his *Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magic*; and the solution may perhaps be found in the Chinese fire-works with which we have been made familiar of late years, and which are used by the famous pantomimist, Fred. Evans, in his demon ballets.

An interval of a century and a half separates the latest of the Pontifical conjurors from the first English professor of the Black Art, after Merlin, of whom historians have preserved any particulars. Robert Greathead, who became Bishop of Lincoln in 1235, and was one of the most learned men of that age, was the son of very poor parents, so poor, indeed, that he was only rescued from beggary by the benevolence of a wealthy citizen, who, observing his handsome and intelligent-looking countenance when he gave him an alms, sent him to school, and afterwards to the University

of Cambridge. From thence he removed to the famous seats of learning on the Isis and the Seine, acquiring, in addition to the Greek and Hebrew languages, the fullest knowledge of geometry, mathematics, astronomy, and optics that the professors of that day could impart.

Gower says that he was profoundly skilled in magic, and that he made a brazen head, to serve as an oracle. This was a very persistent idea of the magicians of the middle ages, though none of them seem to have worked it out very successfully. It was perhaps suggested by the oracles of antiquity, associated in their minds with the colossal head of Memnon, from which vocal sounds were said to emanate at sunrise.

Michael Scot, who was nearly contemporaneous with Greathead, had the repute of a sorcerer, and was held in awe by the ignorant and superstitious masses on account of his supposed magical powers and communings with beings of the invisible world. Hence his inclusion amongst the necromancers by Godwin ; but he does not appear to have made any pretensions to magic, his reputed proficiency in which arose from his knowledge of Greek and Arabic, the characters of which were mistaken for cabalistic signs, and his addiction to the study of chemistry, astrology, and chiromancy.

While Robert Greathead was pursuing his studies at Cambridge, there was born, in Somersetshire, one of the most remarkable men of his time, if we judge him by the power of his mind, but concerning whose life we possess very few particulars that are well authenticated. According to the *Famous History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, the earliest extant edition of which bears the date of 1661, Roger Bacon was a farmer's son, who became a Franciscan friar, and, studying magic more than divinity, became so famous for his proficiency in the Black Art that the king, being on a visit at a nobleman's house in Oxfordshire, sent for him, requesting an example of his skill. We are not told what king this was, but it must have been either Henry III. or Edward I.—probably the former. The friar entertained the king with the harmony of invisible musicians, filled the apartment with the most delicious perfume, and introduced many strangers, who came, none knew how or whence, and some of whom danced, while others, who wore the semblance of Russians, Poles, Armenians, and Hindoos, presented valuable furs. The king was so pleased with this entertainment that he presented the friar with a costly jewel.

While pursuing his studies at Oxford, Bacon became intimately acquainted with the friar Bungay,

who was almost as proficient in magic as himself, though he does not figure in the records of scientific research. These two conjurors constructed a brazen head, concerning which we are told, in the history just referred to, that "in the inward parts thereof there was all things like as is a natural man's head." Unable to give their handiwork the power of speech, they resolved to invoke the aid of Satan; and, with this desperate resolve, proceeded to a wood, in the deepest dingle of which they drew a magic circle, and pronounced an awful incantation. The devil appeared, in the form assigned to him by Anglo-Saxon ignorance and superstition; but declared that he did not possess the power for which the Franciscans gave him credit. Upon being rebuked by Bacon for falsehood, and threatened with bonds, his Satanic majesty informed them that the vapour of six of the most pungent simples known would cause the head to speak in a month: adding, that their labour would be in vain if they did not hear the voice themselves.

The friars dismissed the fiend, and returned to their laboratory, where they prepared the needful decoction, and watched its effects night and day for three weeks. Being then overpowered by somnolence, Bacon's servant, Miles, was set to watch the brazen head, with strict injunctions to call the

two friars in the event of any articulate sounds proceeding from it. Miles tried to keep himself awake by singing, but he did not succeed; and when he was awakened by hearing the head pronounce the words, "Time was," he thought such a brief utterance too insignificant for notice, and went to sleep again. Presently the words, "Time is," issued from the brazen lips; but Miles thought the remark as unworthy of attention as that which had preceded it. Then came the final utterance. "Time is past!" upon which lightning flashed and thunder rolled, and the brazen head fell upon the floor, and was broken to pieces. The friars rushed in at the noise, and Bacon, in his rage at the disaster, would have severely chastised the negligent Miles, if his brother Franciscan had not restrained him.

Bacon and Bungay afterwards accompanied the king on an expedition to France, where the former fired a town with a powerful burning-glass, and, in the confusion which ensued, the English troops took the place by assault. Negotiations for peace followed this event, and, at a friendly meeting of the rival monarchs, the French king introduced a German magician, named Vandermast, and invited Bacon and Bungay to a trial of skill with him. The challenge being accepted, Vandermast raised the

spirit of Pompey, and Bacon responded by opposing to it the shade of Julius Cæsar. The apparitions fought, and Pompey was vanquished.

Bungay then gave a sample of his skill by producing the semblance of the Hesperidian tree, with its golden fruit hanging temptingly from the branches. Vandermast thereupon summoned Herakles to pluck the fruit from the tree; but Bungay raised his hand warningly, and the phantom hesitated. Vandermast threatened in vain; and Herakles, at the bidding of Bungay, caught up the German, threw him upon his shoulder and disappeared with him.

The friars never took any money for these exhibitions of their skill, but on their return to England a report was spread that the king had given Bacon a large sum, and certain robbers were induced by it to effect a burglarious entrance into his abode. The friar, to their astonishment, not only gave each of them a hundred pounds, but invited them to regale themselves, commanding Miles to play the tabor while they supped. Having partaken to their content of the good things placed before them, the robbers began to dance; but soon found themselves constrained to continue dancing as long as Miles played, and to follow wherever he led. Miles left the house, followed by the dancing

thieves, whom he led through fields, over hedges and ditches, until a bridge was reached from which the knaves danced into the river, where they floundered about until they were nearly drowned. Scrambling at length to the bank, they fell down exhausted, and Miles, taking from them the money which his master had given them, left them wet and weary, to vow they would never again rob a magician.

Vandermast, who had not forgiven the English conjurors his defeat before the French court, came to England in search of them, and met Bungay in Kent. After playing some ludicrous tricks upon each other, they agreed to a competition, to be conducted secretly, and met for that purpose in a very secluded spot. A magic circle being drawn, Vandermast produced in it a dragon, which pursued Bungay round the ring, breathing flames and sulphurous smoke. The friar then produced the semblance of the sea-monster to which Andromeda was exposed, and Vandermast suffered in his turn, being drenched with water, which the creature spurted from its capacious jaws. The dragon being slain by a phantom St. George, evoked by Bungay, and the sea-monster by the shade of Perseus, summoned by Vandermast, the English magician next called up Achilles and a band of Greeks, to whom the

German opposed Hector and an equal number of Trojans. A phantom fight ensued; Hector was slain, and the Trojans fled. A terrible thunder-storm now arose, and on the following day the corpses of the rival magicians were found in the wood, seared and blackened by lightning.

From this legendary account, in which it is difficult to discriminate between fact and fiction, let us turn to what is really known concerning Roger Bacon. He was born in Somersetshire, in 1214, studied at Oxford and Paris, and became a friar of the Franciscan order. A little tower, overlooking Folly Bridge, which spans a branch of the Isis, on the road from Oxford to Abingdon, was pointed out for centuries as Friar Bacon's study. It was demolished, however, about forty years ago, when a new bridge replaced the moss-grown structure from which so many generations had looked curiously at the mouldering tower. He acquired a large amount of scientific knowledge, which is evidenced by his works; and he was conversant with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic.

His brother Franciscans accused him of magical practices, and carried their accusation to Pope Clement IV., by whose orders he was prosecuted and imprisoned. He repudiated such practices, as the Franciscans understood them, in his remarkable

treatise on the *Miracles of Art, Nature and Magic,* in reference to the raising of spirits, and the making of charms and cabalistic figures. "Yet herewithal we must remember," he says, "that there are many books commonly reputed to be magical, but have no other fault than discovering the dignity of wisdom."

Some light is thrown upon the mode in which some of the wonders attributed to him may have been performed by the knowledge of optics and chemistry which is displayed in this work. "Glasses and perspectives," he says, "may be framed, to make one thing appear many, one man an army, the sun and moon to be as many as we please;" and he adds, "It is folly to seek the effecting that by magical illusions which the power of philosophy can demonstrate." He mentions also "the making thunder and lightning in the air; yea, with a greater advantage of horror than those which are produced by nature. For a very competent quantity of matter rightly prepared (the bigness of one's thumb) will make the most hideous noise and coruscation." He is said to have invented a magic lantern, but it was probably some improved arrangement of concave mirrors, by means of which he may have produced some of the optical illusions ascribed to him.

The following passages from the work already quoted attest his wondrous intellect, and the extent of his insight of the physical and mechanical sciences, in the most satisfactory and indisputable manner.

"It is possible to make engines to sail withal, as that either fresh or salt water vessels may be guided by the help of one man, and made sail with a greater swiftness than others will which are full of men to help them.

"It is possible to make a chariot move with an inestimable swiftness (such as the *currus falcati* were, wherein our forefathers of old fought), and this motion to be without the help of any living creature.

"It is possible to make engines for flying, a man sitting in the midst whereof, by turning only about an instrument, which moves artificial wings made to beat the air, much after the fashion of a bird's flight.

"It is possible to invent an engine of a little bulk, yet of great efficacy, either to the depressing or elevation of the very greatest weight, which would be of much consequence in several accidents: for hereby a man may either ascend or descend any walls, delivering himself or comrades from prison; and this engine is only three fingers high and four broad.

"A man may easily make an instrument, whereby one man may, in despite of all opposition, draw a thousand men to himself, or any other thing which is tractable.

"A man may make an engine whereby, without any corporeal dangers, he may walk in the bottom of the sea, or other water. These Alexander (as the heathen astronomer assures us) used to see the secrets of the deep.

"Such engines as these were of old, and are made even in our days. These, all of them (excepting only that instrument of flying, which I never saw or know any who hath seen it, though I am exceedingly acquainted with a very prudent man who hath invented the whole artifice), with infinite such like inventions, engines, and devices, are feasible, as making of bridges over rivers without pillars or supporters."

Roger Bacon may be regarded, indeed, as the precursor of his great namesake in the vast field of experimental philosophy. He claimed for observation an equal rank with reason in the investigation of the natural phenomena of the universe; and this claim alone, which was sufficient to cause him to be regarded by his contemporaries as an empiric, warrants his being placed at the head of all the philosophical writers of the middle ages. Like

them, however, he had a firm belief in the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. He did not profess to have ever succeeded in converting the inferior metals into gold, but he followed Gebir, the Arabian pharmacopolist, in regarding *aqua regia*—gold dissolved in nitro-hydro-chloric acid—as the long-sought elixir which possessed the power of indefinitely prolonging the term of human life.

He brought this matter under the attention of the Pope, Nicholas IV., informing his holiness—upon what authority does not appear—that an old man, while ploughing a field in Sicily, had found a golden phial, containing some yellow liquid, which, believing it to be dew, he drank. He thereupon regained the appearance and vigour of his youth, and, abandoning the plough, entered the service of the King of Sicily, in which he remained eighty years. The colour of the solution of gold being bright yellow, and Gebir having pronounced that preparation to have this extraordinary power of rejuvenation, Bacon's faith in the elixir was confirmed by this story, and he may be supposed to have taken many a dose of the golden water, in the belief that he was taking a renewed lease of existence.

The invention of gunpowder has been ascribed to him; but, though that explosive mixture was un-

known in Europe until it was introduced by the Moors about the middle of the fourteenth century, it seems to have been known to the Chinese before the Christian era, and Bacon probably derived his knowledge of it from his researches in Arabic lore. He does not, indeed, claim the invention for himself; for he asserts that the supposed thunder and lightning which terrified the army of Alexander when besieging Oxydrakes, and which were ascribed to magic, were produced by gunpowder. How far he was acquainted with the secret of mixing the components of gunpowder is uncertain. In his instructions for its production, he expresses charcoal by a long word of his own coining, *luruvopovircanutriet*; and, while some writers have suggested that he did so in order to prevent a substance so dangerous from being made by the uninitiated, others have thought that he used the word to conceal his ignorance of the ingredient.

A more distinguished contemporary of Bacon than Bungay and Vandermast was Albert Groot, who was born at Bollstadt, in Suabia, in 1193, and died in 1282, two years before the learned friar of Oxford. He studied medicine at the university of Padua, and afterwards taught it at Cologne and Paris; but resigned his professorship on becoming a brother of the Dominican order. He travelled

through Germany as provincial of that order, and was afterwards appointed Bishop of Ratisbon.

Groot added to the study of medicine and theology that of the sciences which constitute the foundation of what has been called natural magic. Becker says that, when he entertained the King of the Romans (William, Earl of Holland), at Cologne, he produced the verdure and genial atmosphere of summer, though the season was winter, the banquet being prepared in a garden; and that the earl was so much pleased with the transformation that he gave his entertainer a grant of land for the Dominican convent. After the banquet, the verdure disappeared, and the air again became chill.

Other authors inform us that Groot made a brazen man, which was the work of his leisure during thirty years; and that the automaton not only acted as an oracle, but served its constructor as a mechanical attendant. It became in time so garrulous, however, that its loquacity disturbed Groot's fellow-student, the famous Thomas Aquinas, who, in a fit of rage, broke it to pieces with a hammer. Another account of this wonder is, that Groot succeeded in forming a veritable living man, by his profound knowledge of anatomy and physiology; but, this being deemed incredible, some of those who have related the story invented the man of

brass, and substituted it for the more wonderful creation.

A theologian, a physician, a chemist, an astronomer, a magician, and a man of the world, as he was in his own time, Groot is, at the present day, more widely known, perhaps, by the name of Albertus Magnus, as the mediæval magician than as a scientific writer. His treatises on chemical subjects are, however, numerous, and show him to have possessed no insignificant amount of scientific knowledge. He describes the chemical water-bath, the alembic, and various lutes; gives experiments with arsenic, sulphur, and red lead; and shows himself acquainted with the properties of alum and caustic alkali, the refining of gold and silver by means of lead, the mode of determining the purity of gold, and the separation of the precious metals from the ore by amalgamation—a word which, however, waited to be coined by his pupil and brother Dominican, the canonised Thomas Aquinas.

That, along with these glimmerings of the light of science, he should have held some errors was naturally to be expected. He adopted the theory of Gebir, that all the metals are various combinations of mercury and sulphur, an idea which, it must be remembered, was only exploded in the last century by Lavoisier. Chemists of the present day count

elementary substances by the score; but mediæval ideas upon the subject have been held down to our own time. It was at one time a favourite hypothesis of Davy, that the metallic and all other elements are compounds of hydrogen with some unknown base, in different proportions; and he laboured hard to prove it.

Raymond Lully has been classed by some authors among the magicians of the middle ages, but upon very slight grounds. He was born at Majorca, in 1235, and entered the military service of James I., King of Arragon, to whom his father was seneschal; but he abandoned the pursuit of arms, and became a student of theology and medicine at the university of Paris. He is said to have been at one time a pupil of Roger Bacon, which, with his chemical knowledge,—for he produced no fewer than sixteen treatises on chemical subjects,—may have given rise to the reports which associated his name with the Black Art. He subsequently became a Minorite monk, and travelled through Italy, Germany, and England, advocating missions for the conversion of the Mahomedans and heathens of Asia and Africa. He afterwards visited Cyprus, Armenia, and Syria, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel; and, according to one account, was stoned to death, while preaching on the coast of Africa. But other

accounts represent him to have died a natural death at Majorca, in 1315.

The list of mediæval magicians closes with Zeito, the chief conjuror of Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, at the close of the fourteenth century. Duhavius relates that, on the occasion of the marriage of this monarch with Sophia, daughter of the Elector Palatine of Bavaria, the bride's father, knowing the delight which Wenceslaus took in exhibitions of conjuring and juggling, invited to Prague all the adepts in those arts whom he could collect, with a view to a grand performance before the Bohemian court. A dispute arising between Zeito and one of the German conjurors, the former, who was a little deformed man, with a very large mouth, ended it by swallowing his rival, rejecting his boots only, which were very dirty. He then withdrew, but in a short time returned, accompanied by the man whom he had swallowed.

He then showed several transformations, changing his features and stature as well as his costume; glided over the ground in a marvellous manner, without moving his feet; and drove a team of barn-door fowls, harnessed to a car, as fast as the king's horses could draw the royal chariot. During the banquet he transformed the hands of many of the guests into the hoofs of horses and the cloven feet of

oxen, and caused the antlers of deer to appear upon their heads, to the great amusement of those who were not the subject of his pranks. Upon another occasion he is said to have transformed a handful of wheat into a herd of hogs, which he drove to the market and sold for a good price, enjoining the buyer not to let them drink at the river as he drove them home. This caution the purchaser neglected, and the hogs became grains of corn again, as soon as their snouts touched the water.

The conjurors of the East seem, in the meanwhile, to have maintained their ancient fame. Sir John Mandeville, who travelled through a large portion of the Asiatic continent between the years 1322 and 1356, says of the Tartar conjurors whom he saw at the court of the Grand Khan, that "they make the appearance of the sun and the moon in the air; and then they make the night so dark that nothing can be seen; and again they restore the daylight, and the sun shining brightly. Then they bring in dances of the fairest damsels of the world, and the richest arrayed. Afterwards they make other damsels to come in, bringing cups of gold full of the milk of divers animals, and give drink to the lords and ladies; and then they make knights joust in arms full lustily, who run together, and in the encounter break their spears so rudely that the

splinters fly all about the hall. They also bring in a hunting of the hart and the boar, with hounds running at them open-mouthed; and many other things they do by the craft of their enchantments that are marvellous to see."

"Be it done by craft or by necromancy, I wot not," says Mandeville, in his characteristically cautious and guarded manner. The bad repute of our earliest English author for "drawing the long bow" hardly warrants our disbelief of his description of what he saw on this occasion, which is not more wonderful than what we are told by a contemporary Mahomedan traveller, concerning the conjurors of India, and by our own countryman, Chaucer, respecting those of England at the same period. Ibn Batuta says that he saw two conjurors perform before the Mogul court at Delhi, one of whom assumed the form of a cube, and rose into the air, where he remained suspended. The other took off one of his slippers, and struck the ground with it, upon which it rose into the air, and became motionless, at a short distance from the cube. He then touched the other's neck, upon which he descended to the ground, and re-assumed his natural form.

Chaucer tells us that the conjurors of his day were able, in a large hall, to produce "water, with

boats rowed up and down upon it. Sometimes they will bring in the similitude of a grim lion, or make flowers spring up in a meadow; sometimes they cause a vine to flourish, bearing white and red grapes; or show a castle built with stone; and when they please they cause the whole to disappear." He tells us, too, of "a learned clerk, who showed to a friend forests filled with wild deer, where he saw a hundred of them slain, some with hounds and some with arrows; the hunting being finished, a company of falconers appeared upon the banks of a fair river, where the birds pursued the herons, and slew them. He then saw knights jousting upon a plain, and the resemblance of his beloved lady dancing, which occasioned him to dance also." But "when the master that this magic wrought thought fit, he clapped his hands together, and all was gone in an instant." Here we can again discern some arrangement of concave mirrors.

When we consider how marvellous the deceptions of modern conjurors must seem to those whose mechanical and scientific knowledge does not enable them to form any conception of the *modus operandi* from known physical laws, we may readily understand the mingled fear and wonder with which such feats were regarded in a much less enlightened age. Things which must have seemed to them impos-

sible, unless performed by supernatural power, may well have filled them with fear as well as wonder, and it is not surprising that many, even among the educated and better informed, regarded as real what the least educated spectator of the present day would know to be illusory. This must be borne in mind when we read of the wonders of the ancient and mediæval magicians, the accounts of which we must interpret by the light of modern science, rejecting only the false light in which they were regarded in ages of feeble and partial mental illumination.

CHAPTER IV.

Cornelius Agrippa—Phantoms shown in his Magic Mirror—Faust—Legends concerning him—More Phantoms—The Decapitation Trick at Frankfort—The Enchanted Palace and the Fairy Garden—Sabellicus—Magic at Rome—Conjurations of a Sicilian Priest—The Devils in the Coliseum.

The long interval of time which separates Groot and Zeito from Agrippa and Faust witnessed an intellectual awakening, and a degree of scientific progress, which, while they prepared the way for greater triumphs of the conjuror, as conjuring is understood at the present day, had, for the time, the effect of bringing the Black Art into disrepute. While the magician was believed to perform his wondrous feats by the aid of evil spirits, he was regarded with awe; for the upper classes were, as a rule, as ignorant and superstitious as the masses; but, with the awakening of the spirit of inquiry,

and the wider diffusion, upon however homœopathic a scale, of the knowledge which had hitherto been confined to the clergy, the position of the magician underwent a change. He ceased to be regarded with awe as a minister of Satan, and was not yet begun to be welcomed as the entertainer of an idle hour.

Philosophy repudiated him, and religion placed him under a ban. From the time of Roger Bacon the philosopher stepped in advance of the magician, who from that followed at a respectful distance, picking up what crumbs of science he could, and turning them to his own account. Learned men there had been before the monk of Oxford; men who had laboriously studied the works of Aristotle and Pliny and Avicenna; but Roger Bacon was unquestionably the first scientific man, the first original inquirer of the long period of mental darkness which followed the dissolution of the ancient schools of philosophy. That period closed with the invention of printing, in the fifteenth century, but two centuries passed before the progress of mental enlightenment relieved the conjuror, no longer regarded as either a philosopher or a prophet, from the risk of being burned as a wizard.

Cornelius Agrippa may be regarded as the connecting link between the magicians of antiquity and

the dark ages and the conjurors of modern times. He was born in 1486, and at an early age displayed an acute intellect and great aptitude for the acquisition of languages and abstruse learning. He obtained great repute as a chemist and astrologer, applied himself zealously to the search for the philosopher's stone, and wrote a learned disquisition on magic. After experiencing many vicissitudes, and being several times persecuted and imprisoned for sorcery, his reputation for learning caused him to receive invitations and offers of patronage almost simultaneously from the King of England (Henry VIII.), the Princess Margaret of Austria, the Chancellor of the Empire, and an Italian marquis. He accepted the lady's offer, and resided at Vienna until her death, when he obtained the appointment of physician to the Princess Louisa of Savoy, mother of Francis I.

It is uncertain whether the stories concerning Agrippa which are related by Nash in the *Adventures of Jack Wilton* are to be regarded as facts, or as incidents of fiction. On the one hand, it may be urged that Nash is the sole authority for them; on the other, that the magic mirror was known to the magicians of antiquity, and is supposed to have been improved by Roger Bacon. The magic mirror figures so frequently in the memorabilia of the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that we may well believe the incidents related by Nash to have really occurred, although German authors of the time do not mention them.

According to this narrative, the Earl of Surrey met Agrippa at the court of the Elector of Saxony, where, Erasmus and others being also present, the magician raised the phantom of Cicero, as he appeared in the rostrum, in the act of pronouncing the oration for Roscius. The oration, or a portion of it, was delivered by the phantom, in the exact words which have come down to us. If this story rests upon a solid foundation of fact, the art of the ventriloquist must have aided the devices of the magician; for a speaking-tube could not have been used in this case, as it was by Alexander of Abonotica, and, in modern times, in the illusion of the Invisible Girl.

On another occasion, Agrippa showed Surrey the phantom of his beloved Geraldine, weeping on her bed, in his magic mirror. To Sir Thomas More he exhibited the destruction of Troy; to the Earl of Essex, Henry VIII. and the nobles of the English court hunting in Windsor Forest; and to Charles V., the phantoms of Gideon, Solomon, and other persons of Biblical fame.

Whether Nash had any authority for these inci-

dents or not, they are more credible than some of the stories concerning Agrippa which Delvio and Jovius relate as facts. The former tells us, for instance, that the magician, while residing at Louvain, had a student of the university of that city lodging in his house, who, impelled by a desire to learn the nature of his host's secret researches, prevailed upon his hostess to give him the key of Agrippa's study. Shutting himself up in that mysterious apartment, he seated himself in the magician's chair, opened a book at random, and began reading aloud some cabalistical jargon, which he could not understand, but which chanced to be a charm for raising a demon. As he pronounced the last words of the incantation, the demon whom he had unconsciously evoked stood before him, and demanded for what purpose he had been summoned. The student being too much terrified to reply, the demon became infuriated, strangled the unhappy young man, and cast his corpse upon the floor.

On the return of Agrippa, whose absence from home had furnished the opportunity for a gratification which was attended with such a tragical result, he found demons capering about the house, and indulging in fantastic gambols upon the roof, though invisible to other eyes than his own. Having compelled them to desist, and dismissed them to the infer-

nal regions, with the exception of the chief among them, he demanded of that superior imp the cause of their outbreak. On learning it, Agrippa commanded the demon to re-animate the corpse of the student, and show him in the market-place, that it might be seen that he was living. The demon obeyed, and the student walked through the market-place, but fell down as soon as his diabolical attendant left his side, and was immediately found to be dead. Marks of strangulation being found upon his neck, an excited crowd proceeded to Agrippa's house at the heels of the officers of justice; but the magician contrived to escape, and to elude the search that was made for him.

It is Delvio also who tells us that Agrippa, when travelling, paid the inn-keepers with whom he lodged with money which, in a few days afterwards, was found to have changed into shells and chips of horn. This story is told of some other magicians. Jovius says that Agrippa was always accompanied by an imp in the form of a black dog, and that, on his death-bed, he removed from the animal's neck a collar studded with brass nails, which formed a necromantic formula, and bade his familiar depart from him. The dog, it is said, left the house immediately, plunged into a neighbouring river, and was never seen again.

Wier, who was for several years the attendant of Agrippa, assures his readers that this dog was no demon, but a favourite and faithful companion of his master. But, as every sorcerer was supposed to have a familiar demon, the ignorant and superstitious came to the conclusion that the dog must be Agrippa's, and attributed to it the knowledge which his master possessed of everything that passed in the world, not being able to comprehend how so much could otherwise be known to a man who seldom left his study. Wier says that Agrippa had correspondents in all parts of Europe, and it was from them he gained the knowledge of events which so greatly puzzled the ignorant.

Agrippa died in 1534, and Faust—the subject of so many wild legends, and the hero of almost as many dramas and romances—must have died a few years later, if, as is supposed, the extraordinary narrative first published in 1587 appeared about fifty years after his death. This strange history purports to have been partly written by himself, and to have been completed by his servant, Wagner; but there can be no doubt that it was written after his death, and that the author, whoever he was, collected all the marvellous tales concerning Faust which were then floating about Germany, as was done in England by the author of the equally

questionable history of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.

According to this narrative, Faust was the son of a peasant in the duchy of Weimar, and was educated at the university of Wittenberg by the bounty of a wealthy uncle. He was intended for the priesthood, and graduated in divinity; but, lapsing into irreligion, abandoned his theological studies for chemistry and medicine, and these in their turn for magic and necromancy. Being by nature restless, sensual, and ambitious, he aimed at objects which he could not obtain by study, and resolved to invoke the aid of the devil for their accomplishment. For this purpose, he proceeded at night to a spot where four roads met in an extensive forest, and, having drawn a magic circle, pronounced the incantation prescribed by the books which he had consulted.

Lightning immediately flashed around him, and thunder rolled menacingly over his head. As the reverberations died away, strange music floated on the air, and was followed by the clash of weapons, as if many men were engaged in hostile conflict close at hand. As these startling sounds ceased, a griffin appeared, then a dragon, and finally a fiery pillar, with the semblance of a man on the top, who seemed to be burning. The man leaped from

the pillar, and fiery globes, like large balls of red-hot metal, floated round the circle.

Faust being undismayed by these terrific apparitions, Satan himself at length appeared, in the form of a monk, and, after a brief colloquy with the bold student, agreed to meet him at his lodging in Wittenberg. The appointment was kept, and a compact was then entered into, by which Faust was to have all his desires gratified during the term of twenty-four years, on the condition of renouncing the Christian religion and submitting himself to Satan everlastingly at the expiration of the term. Faust signed the contract with his blood, and Satan gave him the demon Mephistopheles to be his constant attendant and the minister of all his desires.

Faust had now abundant wealth, fared sumptuously, and abandoned himself to a life of luxury and sensual pleasures. Attended by Mephistopheles, he travelled over the greater part of Europe, and many regions of Asia and Africa, his familiar demon doing his best to "annihilate time and space" by taking him on his back, and flying with him through the air. His adventures in the Sultan's palace at Constantinople, which he entered by being rendered invisible, and then closed against its imperial tenant and his guards and

attendants, by surrounding it with a dense fog, throw those of Don Juan far into the shade.

On his return to Germany, he met the Emperor, Charles V., at Innspruck, and for his entertainment, raised the phantom of Alexander. At Erfurt, where he lectured on Homer, he made the figures of the deities and heroes of ancient Greece pass before the eyes of the astonished spectators. At Frankfort he found four itinerant conjurors, who cut off each other's heads, and replaced them; and he observed that they had by them a vessel containing a liquid which they pretended was the elixir of life, and into which the heads were dipped as they were successively severed from the bodies. In this vessel they placed a lily-bud, which expanded into full blossom when it had been a few moments in the liquid. Faust having rendered himself invisible, quietly watched the exhibition until the moment when the fourth head was cut off, and dexterously broke the flower from its stalk. This rendered the charm inoperative, and the horrified conjurors found themselves unable to restore the head of their unhappy companion to his shoulders.

The love of mischief which was displayed in this prank appears in several of Faust's adventures, some of which have a suspiciously close resemblance

to stories which are told of other magicians. On one occasion, he asked permission of a churlish peasant to ride on his waggon, and, being refused, pronounced a conjuring formula, on which the horses fell down as if dead, and the wheels, detaching themselves from the waggon, flew through the air in the direction of the town which the peasant had quitted an hour before. Having enjoyed the fellow's terror for awhile, he revived the horses by sprinkling some sand upon them, and told the waggoner that he would find the wheels at the gates of the town he had come from, one at each of the four gates, where the wondering and awe-stricken man found them.

On his return to Wittenberg, he entertained his former college companions with a banquet, spreading the table with every delicacy, and regaling them with the richest wines. Some of his guests wishing to behold Helen, he conjured before their admiring eyes the beautiful Greek, as he had raised Alexander for the entertainment of the emperor. Marlow has altered this incident in his tragedy by making Mephistopheles raise Helen, between two Cupids, for the gratification of Faust *solus*.

We next find Faust on a visit to the Prince of Anhalt, whose hospitality he returns by inviting his host and hostess to a castle which he had erected

by magic on an island in the midst of a lake near Dessau. Aquatic birds of various kinds floated on the water, and perching birds of brilliantly coloured plumage flew from tree to tree. There were five towers and two gates to the castle, the latter opening into a spacious court-yard. Crossing a lofty hall, and traversing a passage with many apartments on the right and the left, Faust conducted his guests to the banqueting-room, where the table was spread with the most delicious viands, the richest wines, and a profusion of gold plate, which he professed to have borrowed from the Pope for that occasion. As they were returning to their own palace, the prince and princess looked back, and saw the magic castle disappear in a flash of fire and a puff of smoke.

Returning to Wittenberg, he again entertained his former fellow-students at Christmas, when, though snow covered the fields around the city, the gardens of Faust displayed verdure and blossoms, as if it had been summer. Roses bloomed, and exhaled their wonted fragrance; and ripe fruit hung from the vines and fig-trees. Faust is represented at this time, when his end was drawing near, as surrounding himself with every luxury, and indulging inordinately in sensual pleasures. He had seven or eight mistresses, selected

from among the most beautiful women of the different countries he had visited; and was served in a magnificence unsurpassed at the courts of the greatest sovereigns.

As the dreaded end of his term of power approached, he became melancholy, often avoided the society of his mistresses and friends, and ceased to invoke the aid of Mephistopheles. On the eve of the impending catastrophe, he invited his old friends to a farewell banquet, after which he confessed to them his compact with Satan, and, at parting with them, just before midnight, mingled expressions of despair with beseechings for their prayers. They had scarcely left him when a violent thunder-storm arose, and, as the midnight hour boomed upon the air, horrid cries and sounds like the hissing of serpents proceeded from the magician's house. On the following morning his friends returned, but Faust had disappeared, and the walls and floor of the apartment in which they had left him were splashed with blood. A corpse, supposed to be Faust's, dismembered, and with the face so frightfully mangled that the features were unrecognisable, was found in a distant field. The priests refused it religious rites, and it was privately interred amidst the ruins of an ancient temple of Mars.

This legendary history of Faust mingles the impossible so profusely with the credible that it has been doubted whether such a person had a real existence. But there is no reason to doubt that a stratum of fact underlies these wild romancings, though what we really know of the magician is very little. Gessner refers to him as a contemporary, and Melancthon mentions him in his letters. Wier informs us that he was born at Cundling, near Cracow, but was educated at Wittenberg, as set forth in the marvellous history of 1587. Many of the stories related of him may be true, as he was probably an itinerant conjuror, and may have exhibited the phantoms which he is said to have raised at Innspruck, Erfurt, and Wittenberg by means of optical apparatus of the kind used by Cornelius Agrippa.

Naudé, who recorded in his history the names of all the most distinguished magicians who had ever lived, mentions Faust only incidentally, however, as being referred to in the announcement of a conjuror who called himself "the most accomplished Georgius Sabellicus, a second Faustus, the spring and centre of the necromantic art, an astrologer, a magician, consummate in chiromancy, and in agromancy, pyromancy, and hydromancy, inferior to none that ever lived." Nothing is known of this

Sabellicus, who blows his trumpet so loudly, to confirm the high eulogium which he pronounced upon himself.

Benvenuto Cellini seems to have dallied with magic in the intervals of his artistic labours, and relates, in his interesting auto-biography, a necromantic adventure in which he played an active part. Becoming acquainted while at Rome with a Sicilian priest, who, he says, was a man of genius, and well versed in Latin and Greek authors, the magic art was one day the subject of their conversation, and the artist observed that he had all his life felt a desire to become acquainted with its mysteries. The priest rejoined that, if he had resolution enough to endure a scene of necromancy, he might be satisfied; and, after some further conversation, they greed to meet one evening in the ruins of the Coliseum, each accompanied by a friend.

On the appointed evening, Cellini, accompanied by an intimate acquaintance named Vincenzio Romoli, met the priest and another student of the Black Art; and they proceeded to the Coliseum, where the priest, "according to the custom of necromancers, began to draw circles upon the ground, with the most impressive ceremonies imaginable; he likewise brought hither assafœtida, several precious perfumes, and fire, with some compositions

also which diffused noisome odours. As soon as he was in readiness, he made an opening to the circle, and having taken us by the hand ordered the other necromancer, his partner, to throw the perfumes into the fire at the proper time, entrusting the care of the fire and perfumes to the rest; and thus he began his incantations. This ceremony lasted above an hour and a half, when there appeared several legions of devils, insomuch that the amphitheatre was quite filled with them." The priest then told Cellini that he might ask something of the demons; but, upon the artist desiring the presence of his Sicilian mistress, the magic spells were found inoperative, and the spirits were dismissed, the priest observing that the presence of a pure boy was necessary.

On the next occasion, Cellini was accompanied, therefore, by a boy about twelve years of age, who was in his service, and by two friends, Agnolino Gaddi and the before-mentioned Romoli. On reaching the Coliseum, the priest made his preparations as before, but with even more impressive ceremonies, and more careful attention to the drawing of the circle. Then he placed in Cellini's hands a *pintaculo*, or magic chart, and bade him turn it as he should direct; and to Romoli and Gaddi he committed the care of the

fire and the perfumes. "Having begun," continues the artist, "to make his tremendous invocations, he called by their names a multitude of demons, who were the leaders of the several legions, and questioned them, by the power of the eternal, uncreated god, who lives for ever, in the Hebrew language, as likewise in Greek and Latin; insomuch that the amphitheatre was almost in an instant filled with demons more numerous than at the former conjuration."

Cellini was again disappointed, the priest being able only to obtain from the demons an assurance that he should see his mistress within a month. They were then exhorted by the magician to stand firm, as the demons were a thousand more in number than he had intended to evoke, and also the most dangerous of their kind. The boy trembled violently, as he grasped Cellini's hand, saying that he saw a million of fierce men, threatening to destroy them, and that four armed giants of immense stature were endeavouring to get within the magic circle. The artist says that they were all trembling with fear, the necromancer as well as the rest; but that, to calm the fears of the boy, he assured him that what they saw was but smoke and shadows, and that the demons were under their power.

The smoke of the burning perfumes slowly dispersed, and the demons as gradually disappeared, their numbers diminishing as they receded from view. Then Cellini and his friends quitted the circle, and proceeded towards their homes, the priest declaring that, though he had often entered magic circles, nothing so extraordinary had ever happened as the scene which they had witnessed that night. As they went along, the boy said that he saw two of the demons leaping and skipping before them, sometimes upon the ground, and sometimes upon the roofs of the houses. The priest gave no attention to them, however, but endeavoured to persuade Cellini to join him in demanding of the demons, on a future occasion, that they should discover to them the treasures of the earth, by which means they should acquire opulence and power, while "these love-affairs were mere follies, from which no good could be expected."

Sir David Brewster, who quotes Cellini's narrative, explains that the demons seen in the Coliseum "were not produced by any influence upon the imaginations of the spectators, but were actual optical phantasms, or the images of pictures or objects produced by one or more concave mirrors or lenses. A fire is lighted, and perfumes and incense are burnt, in order to create a ground for

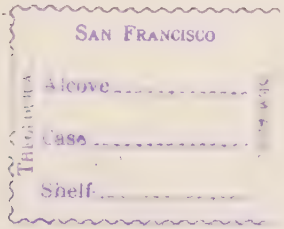
the images, and the beholders are rigidly confined within the pale of the magic circle. The concave mirror and the objects presented to it having been so placed that the persons within the circle could not see the aerial image of the objects by the rays directly reflected from the mirror, the work of deception was ready to begin. The attendance of the magician upon his mirror was by no means necessary. He took his place along with the spectators within the magic circle. The images of the devils were all distinctly formed in the air immediately above the fire, but none of them could be seen by those within the circle.

"The moment, however, the perfumes were thrown into the fire to produce smoke, the first wreath of smoke that rose through the place of one or more of the images would reflect them to the eyes of the spectators, and they would again disappear if the wreath was not followed by another. More and more images would be rendered visible as new wreaths of smoke arose, and the whole group would appear at once when the smoke was uniformly diffused over the place occupied by the images." The "compositions which diffused noisome odours," were intended, he thought, to intoxicate or stupefy the spectators, and thus increase their tendency to deception, or add to the

phantasms before their eyes others which existed only in their own excited imaginations. But when the boy declared that four armed giants were threatening to enter the circle, he gave a correct description of the effect that would be produced by moving the figures nearer to the mirror, and thus magnifying their images, and causing them to advance towards the circle.

However it may have been with Romoli and Gaddi, and notwithstanding Cellini's assertion that both the necromancer and himself trembled with fear, the artist's remark that the demons were under their power, and that what they saw was smoke and shadows, shows that he was not entirely ignorant of the means by which the appearances were produced. Roscoe has recorded his belief, from the description of the scene, and the assuring words addressed to the boy by Cellini, "that the whole of these appearances, like a phantasmagoria, were merely the effects of a magic lantern produced on volumes of smoke from various kinds of burning wood." But this explanation overlooks the important fact that the exhibition took place about the middle of the sixteenth century, while there is no evidence that the magic lantern was known until nearly a century afterwards, when it was invented by Kircher.

The appearances described by Cellini could certainly have been produced by means of the magic lantern, if such an instrument had then been in existence; but no other means of explanation are required than such as are known to have existed in Cellini's time, namely, concave mirrors and lenses. If the necromancer fitted up his concave mirror in a box, which contained also the lights and the figures of the demons, the remarkable assertion of the boy, that he saw two of the demons running and skipping before them as they went home, is accounted for by the box being carried with them.


SAN FRANCISCO
Alcove
Case
Shelf

CHAPTER V.

Persecution of Conjurors—John Dee—Visions in the Magic Mirror—Invocation of a Corpse—Attack on Dee's house by a Mob—Brandon, the Juggler—Jannes and Jambres—Conjuring Tricks of the sixteenth century—The Decapitation Trick—Jean Cantares—A Samoied Conjuror—Indian Conjurors at the Court of Jehangire—Dr. Lamb—The Magic Tree—Invention of the Magic Lantern—English Conjurors of the seventeenth century.

During the latter half of the sixteenth century, and throughout the seventeenth, the professors of magic were compelled by the ban under which they had been placed by the series of Papal edicts initiated by that of Innocent in 1484 to "do their spiriting gently." The spread of the Reformation in northern and central Europe had no effect in rendering the unhappy wight who was accused of sorcery less liable to be imprisoned and exposed in the pillory, happy if he escaped the stake and faggot. The statutes of Henry VIII. against conjuration, witchcraft, false

prophecies, and demolition of crosses provided the penalty of death for such offences; but the amending Act of Elizabeth's reign, while it confirmed and strengthened past legislation on the subject, limited the punishment to the pillory.

It would have been easy for conjurors to have avoided bringing themselves under the operation of this law, if the people had been less ignorant, and therefore less accessible to the suggestions of superstition. But there were few persons in those days who could see the simplest conjuring trick performed without a sensation of awe mingling with their wonder, and there was in every assembly some weak-minded person ready to declare that such things could be done only by the aid of the devil. Reginald Scot states that a juggler was, in the reign of Elizabeth, condemned as a wizard, and would have been pilloried but for the interposition of the Earl of Leicester.

Some of the aspirants to necromantic fame undoubtedly brought the law upon them by foolish practices, in which they indulged simply because they shared in the prevalent ignorance and superstition. Thus, Kelly, the profligate and unprincipled assistant of Dee, disinterred the newly buried corpse of a man, under the influence of the belief that he could, by necromantic ceremonies and

incantations, compel it to answer questions and foretell events. And Dee, though as well educated as any man of his time, was, with regard to some matters, as weak and superstitious as his assistants.

John Dee was born in London in 1527, and received his education at Cambridge, where he devoted himself to the acquisition of scientific knowledge with great assiduity. While studying at this university, he superintended the production of one of the comedies of Aristophanes, and introduced among the machinery an artificial beetle, which flew up to the scenic Olympus, with a man on its back, carrying a basket of provisions. The astonished spectators ascribed this feat, which theatrical mechanists of the present day would regard as a very ordinary one, to the art of the necromancer; and Dee was subjected to so much annoyance through this suspicion that he left Cambridge, and retired to the continent.

Astrology and alchemy entered so largely into the scientific studies of the sixteenth century that it does not surprise us to find a man of Dee's undoubted learning making them his principal study; or to learn that, upon the accession of Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester was sent to consult him as to the aspect of the stars, in order that an auspicious day might be fixed on for her coronation. In 1571,

when he was taken ill at Louvain, the Queen sent over two physicians to attend him; and when he subsequently settled at Mortlake, she visited his house, to view his collection of natural curiosities and mathematical and philosophical instruments. Elizabeth employed him to defend by his pen her title to the countries which English explorers had then discovered in distant parts of the world; and he also received most advantageous offers from the Czar and several successive Emperors of Germany.

Dee was one of those enthusiasts of science who, in those days, having their pride of intellect inflamed, and their imaginations excited by the illumination of their minds in a degree then rare, thought nothing impossible for them, and indulged the wildest dreams of the Rosicrucians. He occupied himself with the search for the philosopher's stone, and was haunted by the belief in the possibility of communicating with the spirits of the invisible world. He tells us, in his curious Memoirs, that one day in November, 1582, as he was praying in his museum, there appeared to him an angel, who gave him a convex piece of black stone, highly polished, which presented visions to the observer, and emitted sounds, by which he was enabled to hold intercourse with spirits.

How far Dee was deluded in this matter by some

trickster, availing of the learned doctor's willingness to believe whatever was most marvellous in science, is a problem which cannot now be solved. He seems to have fully believed in the wonderful black stone, but it is to be observed that, according to all accounts extant, it was his assistant, Kelly, who saw, or pretended to see, the spirits that appeared in the speculum, and reported what he saw and heard to Dee, who sat at a table apart, and recorded the minutes of the spiritual *séance*. A folio volume of these notes was published by Casauban, and much of the like stuff remains in MS. in the library of the British Museum, with the waxen tablets, stamped with mathematical and astronomical signs, which Dee used in his incantations.

Kelly was a profligate and unscrupulous scoundrel, who had been, previously to his connection with Dee, convicted of perjury and punished with the pillory and the loss of his ears. After many disagreements between the magician and his assistant, arising from the latter's unconscientious disposition and overbearing manners, they separated in 1589, and both led for several years a wandering and vagabond life in various parts of Europe. In 1595, Kelly was arrested by order of the Emperor Rodolph II., who himself studied

astrology and alchemy, and is supposed to have adopted this measure to detain the adventurer, whom he believed to have really discovered the art of turning lead and copper into gold. Kelly made an attempt to escape by twisting his sheets into a rope, and descending from a window, but, being a very heavy man, his weight broke the rope, and he fell to the ground, breaking both his legs, and receiving internal injuries so severe that he died shortly afterwards.

Dee was at this time in great poverty, and petitioned the Queen for the means of returning to England; these being given to him, he came over, had an audience of Elizabeth at Richmond, and again resided at Mortlake. He fell into disrepute, however, when it was discovered that he could not make gold, having, according to his own statement, parted with the power of transmutation to Kelly, and that his new assistants, not possessing the easy unscrupulousness and fertile imagination of Kelly, could see nothing in the magic speculum. Neglected by his former patrons, and his house wrecked and his books and apparatus destroyed by a riotous mob, he fell into poverty, relieved at intervals by a little pecuniary aid from the Queen, and died in 1608.

Dee's magic mirror subsequently passed into the

collection of curiosities formed by the Earl of Peterborough, in whose catalogue it is described as "the black stone into which Dr. Dee used to call his spirits." From this collection it passed into the possession of Lady Elizabeth Germaine, and thence into the hands of the Duke of Argyle, whose son, Lord Frederick Campbell, presented it to Horace Walpole. On the dispersion of the Strawberry Hill collection in 1842, when it again changed owners, it was described in the catalogue as "a singularly interesting and curious relic of the superstition of our ancestors, in the celebrated speculum of Kennel coal, highly polished, in a leathern case."

Scot mentions among the most expert conjurors of the reigns of Elizabeth and her successor Brandon and two others, who appear to have worked together under the names, probably assumed, of Jannes and Jambres.

"What wondering and admiration there was," he says, "at Brandon, the juggler, who painted on the wall the picture of a dove, and, seeing a pigeon sitting on the top of a house, said to the King, 'So now your grace shall see what a juggler can do, if he be his craft's master;' and then pricked the picture with a knife so hard and so often, and with so effectual words, as the pigeon fell down from the top of the

house stark dead. I need not write any further circumstance to show how the matter was taken; what wondering was thereat,—how he was prohibited to use that trick any further, lest he should employ it in any other kind of murder; as though he whose picture soever he had pricked must needs have died, and so the life of all men in the hands of a juggler, as is now supposed to be in the hands and wills of witches."

This author, whose work on demonology and witchcraft was published in 1584, enumerates the tricks performed by the itinerant conjurors of the latter half of the sixteenth century, which comprise many that still evoke wonder and admiration. The list includes swallowing a knife; thrusting a knife through the head of a fowl, and restoring the bird to life; burning a card, and afterwards producing it from the pocket of a bystander; conveying a coin from one pocket to another; converting money into counters, or counters into money; conveying money into another person's hand; making a coin sink through a table or vanish from a handkerchief; tying a knot, and undoing it by the power of words; taking beads from a string, the ends of which are held fast by another person; removing corn from one box to another; turning wheat into flour by the power of words; burning a thread and

making it whole again; pulling innumerable ribbons from the mouth; thrusting a knife into the head or arm; putting a ring through the cheek; and cutting off the head of a person, and afterwards restoring it to its former position. This last trick holds a conspicuous place among the more remarkable conjuring feats of the present day which were performed by itinerant conjurors three hundred years ago, when it was sometimes called "The decollation of St. John the Baptist." As shown in the engraving in Malcolm's work on the amusements of the people, it was performed upon a table, which had in it two circular openings, one to enable the confederate who submitted to the operation to conceal his head, the other, which corresponded to a similar opening in the dish in which the head seemed to be placed, to receive the head of another confederate, who was concealed beneath the table in a sitting position. Before pretending to sever the head, the performer showed an ordinary carving knife to the spectators around, who were prevented by a sleight-of-hand trick from observing the substitution for it of the knife actually used, and which had a semi-circular opening in the blade to fit the neck.

Scot concludes his enumeration and commentary with a recommendation to his readers to visit Jean

Cantares, a Frenchman residing in the parish of St. Martin,—"in conversation a honest man, and he will show as much and as strange actions as these, who getteth not his living thereby, but laboureth for the same with the sweat of his brow, and nevertheless hath the best hand and conveyance of any man that liveth this day."

Europeans were at this time becoming acquainted with distant parts of the globe, and learning something concerning the conjurors and jugglers of remote regions of Asia. Richard Johnson, who sailed with Stephen Burrough to the Gulf of Oby in 1556, and kept a journal of the voyage, described what he had seen done in a tent by an old Samoied priest, which he thought very wonderful, though he evidently suspected some imposture. The priest, who wore a white fillet round his head, and whose countenance was concealed by a veil of chain-mail, ornamented with the teeth of beasts and fishes, commenced the performance by beating a kind of kettledrum, and singing in a loud, rough voice, while the native auditors joined in the chorus. During the singing of this hymn or incantation, the priest seemed to pass gradually into a state of frenzy, and on its conclusion fell down as if dead.

After a little while he arose, and, as the account

proceeds, "took a sword of a cubit and a span long (I did mete it myself), and put it into his belly, but no wound was to be seen (they continuing in their sweet song still). Then he put the sword into the fire till it was warm, and so thrust it into the slit of his shirt, and thrust it through his body, as I thought; the point being out of his shirt behind, I laid my finger upon it, then he pulled out the sword and sat down. This being done, they set a kettle of water over the fire to heat, and when the water doth seeth, the priest beginneth to sing again, they answering him; for so long as the water was in heating they sat and sang not. Then they made a thing being four square, and in height and squareness of a chair, and covered with a gown, very close the forepart thereof, for the hinder part stood to the tent side. The water still seething on the fire, and this square seat being ready, the priest put off his shirt and the thing like a garland which was on his head, with those things which covered his face; and he had on yet all this while a pair of hose of deer's skins, with the hair on, which came up to his buttocks. So he went into the square seat, and sat down like a tailor, and sang with a strong voice or hallowing.

"Then they took a small line made of deer's skins of four fathoms long, and with a final knot

the priest made it fast about his neck and under his left arm, and gave it unto two men standing on both sides of him, which held the ends together. Then the kettle of hot water was set before him in the square seat (at this time the square seat was not covered), and then it was covered with a gown of broad cloth, without lining, such as the Russes do wear. Then the two men which did hold the ends of the line, still standing there, began to draw, and drew until they had drawn the ends of the line stiff and together, and then I heard a thing fall into the kettle of water which was before him in the tent. Thereupon I asked them that sat by me in the tent what it was that fell into the water that stood before him; and they answered me that it was his head, his shoulder, and left arm, which the line had cut off,—I mean the knot which I saw afterward drawn hard together. Then I rose up, and would have looked whether it was so or not; but they laid hold on me, and said that if they should see him with their bodily eyes, they should live no longer." When they had chanted and shouted for some time, "the priest lifted up his head, with his shoulder and arm, and all his body, and came forth to the fire."

Greater wonders than this were reported from India. Sir Thomas Roe, who visited that country

in 1615, charged with a mission from the East India Company to the Emperor Jehangire, saw many conjurors and jugglers there; but his attention was much absorbed by commercial transactions and the intrigues of the court of Ajmere, that he gives no account of their feats. Jehangire himself, however, relates that he once witnessed the performances of some Bengalee conjurors and jugglers, whose feats were so remarkable that he ascribed them without hesitation to supernatural power. The conjurors were desired to produce, upon the spot, and from seed, ten mulberry trees. They immediately planted ten seeds, which in a few minutes produced as many trees, each, as it grew into the air, spreading forth its branches, and yielding excellent fruit. In like manner, apple, fig, almond, walnut, and mango trees were produced, all yielding fruit, which Jehangire assures us was of the finest quality.

But this was not all. "Before the trees were removed," says the imperial author, "there appeared among the foliage birds of such surprising beauty, in colour and shape, and melody of song, as the world never saw before. At the close of the operation, the foliage, as in autumn, was seen to put on its varied tints, and the trees gradually disappeared into the earth from which they had been made to

spring." Major Price stated, many years ago, that he had himself witnessed similar feats in India, but that a sheet was employed to cover the process. "I have, however," he adds, "no conception of the means by which they were accomplished, unless the jugglers had the trees about them in every stage, from the seedling to the fruit."

"One night," continues Jehangire, "and in the very middle of the night, when half this globe was wrapped in darkness, one of these seven men stripped himself almost naked, and having spun himself round several times, he took a sheet, with which he covered himself, and from beneath the sheet drew out a splendid mirror, by the radiance of which a light so powerful was produced as to illuminate the hemisphere to an incredible distance around; to such a distance, indeed, that we have the attestation of travellers to the fact, who declared that on the night on which the exhibition took place, and at the distance of ten days' journey, they saw the atmosphere so powerfully illuminated as to exceed the brightness of the brightest day they had ever seen.

"They placed in my presence a large cauldron, and, partly filling it with water, threw into it eight of the smaller maunds of Irak of rice; when, without the application of the smallest spark of fire,

the cauldron began to boil, and in a little time they took off the lid, and drew from it nearly a hundred platters full, each with a stewed fowl at the top. They produced a man whom they divided limb from limb, actually severing his head from the body. They scattered these members along the ground, and in this state they laid for some time. They then extended a sheet over the spot, and one of the men went beneath it, and in a few minutes came out, followed by the individual supposed to have been cut into joints, in perfect health and condition, and one might have safely sworn that he had never received any injury."

Here we have the Palingenesia of Dr. Lynn performed more than two hundred and fifty years ago. The rest of the feats which so astonished the Mogul Emperor seem to have been optical deceptions. "They caused," he says, "two tents to be set up, one at the distance of a bow-shot from the other, the entrances being exactly opposite; they raised the canvas all round, and desired that it might be particularly observed that the tents were empty. Then, fixing them to the ground, two of the men entered, one into each tent. Thus prepared, they said they would undertake to bring out of the tents any animal we chose to mention, whether bird or beast, and set them in conflict with each other.

Khaun-e-Jahaun, with a smile of incredulity, required them to show us a battle between two ostriches. In a few minutes two ostriches of the largest size issued, one from each tent, and attacked each other with such fury that blood was seen streaming from their heads; they were so equally matched, however, that neither could get the better of the other, and they were therefore separated by the men, and conveyed within the tents. They continued to produce from either tent whatever animal we chose to name, and before our eyes set them to fight in the manner I have attempted to describe; and although I have exerted my utmost invention to discover the secret of the contrivances it has been entirely without success.

"They were furnished with a bow and about fifty steel-pointed arrows. One of the men took the bow, and shooting an arrow into the air, the shaft stood fixed at a considerable height; he shot a second arrow which flew straight to the first, to which it became attached, and so with every one of the remaining arrows to the last of all, which striking the sheaf suspended in the air, the whole immediately broke asunder, and came at once to the earth.

"They produced a chain fifty cubits in length, and in my presence threw one end of it towards the

sky, where it remained as if fastened to something in the air. A dog was then brought forward, and, being placed at the lower end of the chain, immediately ran up, and, reaching the other end, disappeared in the air. In the same manner a hog, a panther, a lion, and a tiger were successively sent up the chain, and all disappeared at the upper end. At last they took down the chain, and put it into a bag, no one ever discerning in what way the animals were made to vanish into the air in the mysterious manner described."

There was living at this time one Dr. Lamb, an amateur of the Black Art, concerning whom a story is told by Baxter which is very characteristic of the author and the time in which he lived. Lamb is said to have invited two friends to his house, and there amused them by causing a tree to grow, and three little men to appear and cut it down with little axes. One of the spectators picked up two or three chips of the tree and carried them home, where he had no sooner arrived than a violent storm arose. "You have been to Dr. Lamb's," said his wife, as she shrank from the lightning flash, and trembled at the rolling thunder. He acknowledged the fact, related what he had seen, and produced the chips. His wife insisted that it was the bringing of these chips into the house which had raised the storm;

and Baxter gravely relates that, on these memorials of Lamb's feat being thrown out of the window, the storm ceased immediately. Lamb rendered himself so unpopular by his indulgence in conjuring as a pastime that in 1640 an ignorant and brutal mob rose on him, and murdered him.

The invention of the magic lantern by Kircher, about the middle of the seventeenth century, supplied conjurors with one of the most valuable instruments of the craft. The concave mirror, which does not appear to have been always, or even usually, fitted up as there is reason for believing the instrument which Cellini saw exhibited at Rome was, required for its display a separate apartment, or at least a means of concealment which could not always, on ordinary occasions, be commanded; but the magic lantern, with its lenses, its lamp, and its slides, could be fitted up in a small compass, and was much better adapted therefore to the requirements of the itinerant conjuror who had not the means either of providing a less portable and more expensive apparatus, or of transporting and erecting it.

According to the rude representations of it which are extant, Kircher's lantern was of large size, and consisted of a box, fitted with a door on one side, a chimney at the top to carry off the smoke from the

lamp, and, in the front, a tube containing a lens, and a frame to hold the pictures to be exhibited, which were painted on glass. Oil was the illuminating medium, and the light was concentrated upon the picture by means of a reflector of polished steel.

The magic lantern does not appear, however, to have been often used by conjurors until a considerable time after its invention. Ady, whose curious pamphlet entitled *A Candle in the Dark*, was published in 1656, as an antidote to the demoralising influence of the belief in diabolism and witchcraft, mentions among the conjuring tricks of his time some which are not included in Scot's enumeration of 1584, but they include no optical illusions. These require a room for their exhibition, and the conjurors whom Ady describes generally exercised their art at fairs and markets. It is a bad time for professors of the Black Art when the people have lost their reverence for them as persons exercising supernatural power, and have not learned to regard them as harmless entertainers.

Ady mentions the tricks of drawing wine from the forehead, or from a post, and writing red and blue with the same ink. The first is a common one which has been performed in the streets of London by itinerant conjurors of the present day; but I do not remember ever to have seen the last. Ady says

that it was performed by rubbing a portion of the paper with fresh lemon peel, drying it, and writing with ink made of stone blue. On the prepared portion of the paper the writing appeared bright red, and on other parts blue, which, says our author, "causeth great admiration in the beholders to see a man with one pen and one and the same ink write red and blue."

Ady's description of the *modus operandi* of the conjurors of the seventeenth century is worth reading for its quaintness, and for the sake of comparison with the performances of our own time. He says:—

"A juggler, knowing the common tradition and foolish opinion that a familiar spirit in some bodily shape must be had for the doing of strange things, beyond the vulgar capacity, he therefore carrieth about him the skin of a mouse stopped with feathers, or some like artificial thing, and in the hinder part thereof sticketh a small springing wire of about a foot long, or longer, and when he begins to act his part in a fair or a market, before vulgar people, he bringeth forth his imp, and maketh it spring from him once or twice upon the table, and then catcheth it up, saying, Would you be gone? I will make you stay and play some tricks for me before you go; and then he nimbly sticketh one end of the wire

upon his waist, and maketh his imp spring up three or four times to his shoulder, and nimbly catcheth it, and pulleth it down again every time, saying, Would you be gone? In troth, if you be gone I can play no tricks or feats of activity to-day; and then holdeth it fast in one hand, and beateth it with the other, and slyly maketh a squeaking noise with his lips, as if his imp cried, and then putteth his imp in his breeches, or in his pocket, saying, I will make you stay, would you be gone?

"Then begin the silly people to wonder and whisper; then he showeth many slights of activity as if he did them by the help of his familiar, which the silliest sort of beholders do verily believe, amongst which he espyeth one or other young boy or wench, and layeth a tester or shilling in his hand wetted, and biddeth him hold it fast; but whilst the said boy or silly wench thinketh to enclose the piece of silver fast in the hand, he nimbly taketh it away with his finger, and hasteneth the holder of it to close his hand, saying, Hold fast, or it will be gone, and then mumbleth certain words, and crieth by the virtue of *Hocus, pocus, hay passe, prestor, be gone;* now open your hand, and the silly boy or wench, and the beholders, stand amazed to see that there is nothing left in the hand, and then for the confirmation of the wonder a confederate with the juggler

standeth up among the crowd (in habit like some countryman or stranger that came in like the rest of the people), saying, I will lay with you forty shillings you shall not convey a shilling out of my hand. It is done, saith the juggler; take you this shilling in your hand. Yea, marry (saith he) and will hold it so fast as if you get it from me by words speaking, I will say you speak in the devil's name; and with that he looketh in his hand in the sight of all the people, saying, I am sure I have it; and then claspeth his hand very close, and layeth his other hand to it also, pretending to hold it the faster, but withal slily conveyeth away the shilling into his glove, or into his pocket, and then the juggler crieth, *Hay passe, presto vade, jubeo, by the virtue of hocus pocus, 'tis gone.* Then the confederate openeth his hand, and in a dissembling manner faineth himself much to wonder, that all that are present may likewise wonder.

"Then the juggler calleth to his boy, and biddeth him bring him a glass of claret wine, which he taketh in his hand and drinketh, and then he taketh out of his bag a fonnel made of tin or latine, double, in which double device he hath formerly put as much claret wine as will almost fill the glass again, and stopping this fonnel at the little end with his finger, turneth it up that all may behold it to be

empty, and then setteth it to his forehead, and taketh away his finger, and letteth the wine run into the glass, the silly spectators thinking it to be the same wine which he drank to come again out of his forehead. Then he saith, If this be not enough, I will draw good claret wine out of a post. And then taketh out of his bag a wine-gimblet, and so he pierceth the post quite through with his gimblet, and there is one of his boys on the other side of the wall with a bladder and a pipe, and conveyeth the wine to his master through the post, which his master (vintner like) draweth forth into a pot, and filleth it into a glass, and giveth the company to drink.

"Another way it is very craftily done by a Spanish *borachio*, that is, a leather bottle as thin and lithe as a glove, the neck whereof is about a foot long, with a screw at the top instead of a stopple; this bottle the juggler holdeth under his arm, and letteth the neck of it come along to his hand under the sleeve of his coat, and with the same hand taketh the tap in the fasset that is in the post, and yet holdeth the tap half in and half out, and crusheth the bottle with his arm, and with his other hand holdeth a wine-pot to the tap, so that it seemeth to the beholders that the wine cometh out of the tap, which yet cometh out of the bottle,

and then he giveth it among the company to drink, and being all drunk up but one small glass at the last, he calleth to his boy, saying, Come, sirrah, you would fain have a cup; but his boy maketh answer in a disdainful manner, No, master, not I; if that be good wine that is drawn out of a post, I will lose my head.

"Yea, sirrah, saith his master, then your head you shall lose; come, sirrah, you shall go to pot for that word; then he layeth his boy down on the table on a carpet, with his face downward, commanding him to lie still. Then he taketh a linen cloth, and spreadeth it upon the boy's head broad upon the table, and by slight of hand conveyeth under the cloth a head with a face, limned so like his boy's head and face that it is not discerned from it; then he draweth forth his sword or falchion, and seemeth to cut off his boy's head; but withal it is to be noted, that the confederating boy putteth his head through a slit in the carpet, and through a hole in the table made on purpose, yet unknown to the spectators, and his master also by slight of hand layeth to the boy's shoulder a piece of wood made concave at one end like a scuppit, and round at the other end like a man's neck with the head cut off; the concave end is hidden under the boy's shirt, and the other end ap-

peareth to the company very dismal (being limned over by the cunning limner), like a bloody neck, so lively in shew that the very bone and marrow of the neck appeareth, insomuch that some spectators have fainted at the sight hereof.

"Then he taketh up the false head aforesaid by the hair, and layeth it in a charger at the feet of the boy, leaving the bare bloody neck to the view of the deluded beholders, some gazing upon the neck, some upon the head, which looketh gashful, some beholding the corpse tremble like a body new slain. Then he walketh to the table, saying to the head and the seeming dead corpse, Ah ha, sirrah, you would rather lose your head than drink your drink? But presently he smiteth his hand upon his breast, saying, To speak the very truth in cool blood, the fault did not deserve death; therefore I had best set on his head again. Then he spreadeth his broad linen cloth upon the head, and taketh it out of the charger, and layeth it to the shoulders of the corpse; and by slight of hand conveyeth both the head and the false neck into his bag, and the boy raiseth up his head from under the table. Then his master taketh away the linen cloth that was spread upon him, and saith, By the virtue of *hocus pocus,* and Fortunatus his night cap, I wish thou mayest live again. Then the boy riseth up

safe and well, to the admiration of the deluded beholders."

The origin of the formulas used by conjurors in their tricks, and which Scot alludes to in the phrase "by the power of words," cannot be traced. The words *hocus pocus* first occur in a pamphlet printed in 1641, the author of which, enumerating the sights of Bartholomew fair, mentions "hocus pocus, with three yards of tape or ribbon in his hand, showing his art of legerdemain."

Ady, writing fifteen years later, says, in referring to the conjurors of the first half of the seventeenth century,—"I will speak of one man more excelling in that craft than others, that went about in King James's time, and long since, who called himself the King's Majesty's most excellent Hocus Pocus; and so was he called because at playing every trick he used to say, *Hocus pocus tontus talontus, vade celerite jubeo,* a dark composition of words, to blind the eyes of the beholders, to make his trick pass the more currently without discovery, because when the eye and the ear of the beholder are both earnestly busied, the trick is not so easily discovered, nor the imposture discerned.

"The going about of this fellow," says Ady, "was very useful to the wise, to see how easily people among the ancient heathen were deceived in

times and places of ignorance, for in these times many silly people (yea, and some also that think themselves wise), will stand like Pharaoh and his servants, and admire a juggling imposture, or like the silly Samaritans (Acts viii. 10), who did so much admire a seducing juggler as they said, He was the great power of God, until they saw the true and real miracle of Philip v. 6. And others again, on the contrary, will stand affrighted, or run out of the room scared, like fools, saying, The devil is in the room, and helpeth him to do such tricks; and some saying absolutely, He is a witch, and ought to be hanged."

It is no small testimony to the intelligence of the conjurors of that day that they contrived to escape hanging, while so many thousands of ignorant and weak-minded persons were hanged, drowned, or burnt on the absurd charge of witchcraft. Lamb was an amateur, and fell a victim to an ebullition of popular fury; and, from the accession of James I., in the first year of whose reign sorcery was made a capital offence, none of the professors of the Black Art seem to have suffered the penalty. A practised hand may have been concerned in the tricks played in a weaver's house at Glenluce, in Wigtonshire, about the time when Ady was trying to infuse a little common sense into the popular mind; but it was not detected.

Sinclair, who tells the Glenluce story in his *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, must have been one of those whom Ady alludes to as persons "who think themselves wise," though he was professor of philosophy in the university of Glasgow. He relates that strange sounds were heard, and strange sights seen, in the weaver's house, and that the minister was sent for to exorcise the evil spirit that was supposed to have taken up its abode therein. The reverend gentleman went to the house, and conjured the spirit to say what and whence he was.

"The foul fiend replied," says Sinclair, "that he was an evil spirit, come from the bottomless pit of hell to vex this house, and that Satan was his father. And presently there appeared a naked hand, and an arm from the elbow down, beating upon the floor until the house did shake again; and also he uttered a most fearful and loud cry, saying, 'Come up, my father—come up. I will send my father among you: see, there he is behind your backs!' Then the minister said, 'I saw, indeed, a hand and an arm, when the stroke was given, and heard.' The devil said to him, 'Saw you that? It was not my hand; it was my father's: my hand is more black in the loof [palm]. Would you see me,' says the foul thief, 'put out the

candle, and I shall come butt the house [into the outer room] among you like fire-balls.'"

The minister failed to exorcise the demon, whose hand one day snatched a plate of porridge from the weaver's wife. "Give me back the plate!" cried the poor woman; and the plate was thereupon flung at her head, though no one was near, and she saw not how it was done. We shall meet with the hand and arm without a body again, more than two hundred years later, in the back drawing-rooms of certain believers in the spiritualism which, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, has taken the place of the witchcraft of the seventeenth.

CHAPTER VI.

A New Era in Conjuring—Neve and his Book—Story of an Indian Fakeer—Fawkes and Pinchbeck—The Younger Yeates—The Recreations of Comus—Jonas—A Conjuror's Challenge—The Pigeon Trick—Small Fry of the Profession—Boaz—Cosmopolita—Ray—George III. and the Conjuror—Social Position of Conjurors in the Last Century.

The dense ignorance which prevailed during the seventeenth century on the subject of conjuring, as the word is now understood, would be scarcely credible at the present day, if instances did not even now occur at intervals to show that there are still minds which the light of knowledge has not yet penetrated. The efforts of Scot and Ady to dispel the foul mist of superstition were unavailing. Books did not reach the masses in those days, and hence, though the antidote of the former author was administered in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, and that of the latter in the middle of the seventeenth, the beginning of the eighteenth found

people as ready to drown a wizard as their ancestors had been.

Porta had, in the meantime, endeavoured to enlighten his countrymen on the subject by publishing his treatise on natural magic, in which the real character of the conjuror, as a public entertainer, was, for the first time, fairly set forth. "There are," he says, "two kinds of magic: one is infamous and unhappy, because it concerns itself with foul spirits, and consists of enchantments prompted by wicked curiosity; and this is called sorcery, an art which all learned and good men detest, and which is unable to yield any truth of reason and nature, but stands merely upon fancies and imaginations, such as vanish presently away, and leave nothing behind them. The other sort is natural magic, which all excellent wise men admit and favour, and receive with great applause."

A book which was published in 1716, by Richard Neve, whose name is the first which we meet with in the conjuring annals of the eighteenth century, bears traces of the lingering fear of diabolical agency which still infected the minds of the people. Having stated, in his preface, that his book contained directions for performing thirty-three leger-demain tricks, besides many arithmetical puzzles and many jests, Neve says,—"I dare not say that

I have here set down all that are or may be performed by legerdemain, but thou hast here the most material of them: and if thou rightly understandest these, there is not a trick that any juggler in the world can show thee, but thou shalt be able to conceive after what manner it is done, if he do it by slight of hand, and not by unlawful and detestable means, as too many do at this day."

He then proceeds to describe the sort of man the operator must be:—"First, He must be one of a bold and audacious spirit, so that he may set a good face upon the matter. Secondly, He must have a nimble and cleanly conveyance, for if he be a bungler he discredits both himself and his art: and therefore he must practise in private till he be perfect; *Usus promptus facit;* and by that means, his tricks being cunningly handled, he shall deceive both the eye, the hands, and the ear; for oftentimes it falls out in this art, *deceptio visus deceptio tactus, et deceptio auditus.* Thirdly, He must have none of his trinkets wanting when he is to use them, least he be put to a *non-plus.* Fourthly, He must also have his terms of art; namely, certain strange terms and emphatical words, to grace and adorn his actions, and to astonish the beholders. And these odd kinds of speeches must be various, according to the action he undertakes; as, *Hey, fortuna, furia, nun-*

quam credo, pass pass ; when come you, sirrah ? Or this way, *Hey, Jack, come aloft for your master's advantage.* Or otherwise, *Ailif, casil, zaze, hit, met mertat, Saturnus, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna.* Or thus, *Dorocti, Micocti, et Senarocti, velu barocti, Asmarocti, Ronnsee, Faronsee, hey pass pass, etc.* Fifthly, and lastly, He must have such gestures of body as may lead away the spectators' eyes from a strict and diligent observation of his manner of conveyance."

During the interval between the publication of Neve's work and the advent of the famous Fawkes, Hamilton's travels in India made the reading portion of the public acquainted with the tricks of the fakeers, or religious mendicants, of that country, some of whom have exhibited remarkable feats, though they are much more frequently impostors than legitimate conjurors. One of these fellows boasted that he would appear at Amadabant, a town about two hundred miles from Surat, within fifteen days after being buried, ten feet deep, at the latter place. The Governor of Surat resolved to test the fellow's powers, and had a grave dug, in which the fakeer placed himself, stipulating that a layer of reeds should be interposed between his body and the superincumbent earth, with a space of two feet between his body and the reeds. This was done,

and the grave was then filled up, and a guard of soldiers placed at the spot to prevent trickery.

A large tree stood ten or twelve yards from the grave, and beneath its shade several fakeers were grouped around a large earthen jar, which was filled with water. The officer of the guard, suspecting that some trick was to be played, ordered the jar to be moved, and, on this being done by the soldiers, after some opposition on the part of the dirty fellows assembled round it, a shaft was discovered, with a subterranean gallery from its bottom to within two feet of the grave. The impostor was thereupon made to ascend, and a riot ensued, in which he and several other persons were slain.

This trick has been repeated several times in India, under different circumstances, one of the most remarkable instances being that related by an engineer officer named Boileau, who was employed about forty years ago in the trigonometrical survey of that country. I shall relate this story in the officer's own words, premising that he did not witness either the interment or the exhumation of the performer, but was told that they took place in the presence of Esur Lal, one of the ministers of the Muharwul of Jaisulmer.

"The man is said, by long practice, to have acquired the art of holding his breath by shutting the

mouth, and stopping the interior opening of the nostrils with his tongue; he also abstains from solid food for some days previous to his interment, so that he may not be inconvenienced by the contents of his stomach, while put up in his narrow grave; and, moreover, he is sewn up in a bag of cloth, and the cell is lined with masonry, and floored with cloth, that the white ants and other insects may not easily be able to molest him. The place in which he was buried at Jaisulmer is a small building about twelve feet by eight, built of stone; and in the floor was a hole, about three feet long, two and a half feet wide, and the same depth, or perhaps a yard deep, in which he was placed in a sitting posture, sewed up in his shroud, with his feet turned inwards towards the stomach, and his hands also pointed inwards towards the chest. Two heavy slabs of stone, five or six feet long, several inches thick, and broad enough to cover the mouth of the grave, so that he could not escape, were then placed over him, and I believe a little earth was plastered over the whole, so as to make the surface of the grave smooth and compact. The door of the house was also built up, and people placed outside, that no tricks might be played, nor deception practised.

"At the expiration of a full month, the walling of the door was broken, and the buried man dug

out of the grave; Trevelyan's moonshee only running there in time to see the ripping open of the bag in which the man had been enclosed. He was taken out in a perfectly senseless state, his eyes closed, his hands cramped and powerless, his stomach shrunk very much, and his teeth jammed so fast together that they were forced to open his mouth with an iron instrument to pour a little water down his throat. He gradually recovered his senses and the use of his limbs; and when we went to see him he was sitting up, supported by two men, and conversed with us in a low, gentle tone of voice, saying that we 'might bury him again for a twelvemonth, if we pleased.'" The narrator adds, that this remarkable individual was said, after these experiments, to feel some anxiety concerning the proper performance of the functions of his stomach and bowels.

Fawkes must have been before the public as a showman and conjuror long before 1732, in which year Setchel's print of Bartholomew fair must have been published, in which Fawkes's show occupies a conspicuous place, with its pictures of juggling and acrobatic feats, and the great conjuror performing one of his tricks. In the same year, Fawkes performed in a room in James Street, near the Haymarket, where he exhibited the

ingenious flower-trick of the Indian conjurors, reproduced nearly a century and a half later by Stodare, and more recently by Dr. Lynn, at the Egyptian Hall. I infer the earlier practise of Fawkes from the fact that he died in 1732, when he was credited with the accumulation of ten thousand pounds by the exercise of his profession.

Fawkes's show and paraphernalia passed at his death into the possession of his son and his late partner, a clever mechanician named Pinchbeck, whose musical clock and cyclorama were among the chief attractions of the exhibition. They continued to attend the fairs held in and around London, and their advertisement for the Southwark fair of 1733 mentions, among the items of their programme, "the diverting and incomparable dexterity of hand, performed by Mr. Pinchbeck, who causes a tree to grow out of a flower-pot, on the table, which blossoms and bears ripe fruit in a minute; also a man in a maze, or a perpetual motion, where he makes a little ball to run continually which would last was it for seven years together only by the word of command. He has several tricks entirely new, which were never done by any other person than himself."

Pinchbeck had at this time a shop in Fleet Street, known by the sign of the Musical

Clock, where he displayed and sold his mechanical curiosities; and he also speculated, in conjunction with Fawkes, in exhibitions and entertainments of various descriptions, including marionettes and wax-work. The latest advertisement which I have been able to discover in which Pinchbeck's name appears relates to the Bartholomew fair of 1742. He probably retired from the profession shortly afterwards, for in 1746 the name of Fawkes appears in conjunction with that of Warner, as proprietors of a theatrical booth. This connection was of very brief duration, however, for in the following year we find Warner in partnership with the elder Yeates.

The younger Yeates attended the fairs with his father, in whose show we first find him exhibiting his "incomparable dexterity of hand" in 1733, on Southwark Green. An advertisement of 1735 informs us that they "continue to entertain the public every evening, at the Royal Exchange, with their inimitable performances," commencing with "Yeates junior's dexterity of hand, in which he's in general allow'd to surpass all who now appear in Great Britain." In 1737 we find them in Smithfield during Bartholomew fair, but the younger Yeates left his father's show soon afterwards to seek the favours of fortune on his own account,

with what success my researches have not enabled me to state.

There was a long interval between the last performance of Pinchbeck and the appearance of Comus, a French conjuror, who commenced his "physical, mechanical, and mathematical recreations" in a large room in Panton Street at Christmas, 1765. There were probably humble professors of the art frequenting the fairs, or "pitching" in market-places and on village greens, but their names and performances have not been recorded. Comus announced that his stay in London would be limited to fifteen days, but he prolonged it to three months, giving two performances daily, at twelve and six, and charging five shillings for admission. It may be inferred, therefore, that he found his visit profitable.

Comus did not announce to the public the wonders which he would perform until the last weeks of his stay in London. In his first advertisement he merely observes that "his operations are so surprisingly astonishing that they would appear supernatural in an age and a nation less instructed." A month later he informed the public that they were "performed in so singular a manner that, notwithstanding the surprising relations given thereof by the nobility and gentry, to whom the Sieur Comus

returns his sincere thanks for their kind reception, he would be afraid to pass for an impostor, if he gave a full detail of his operations to the public." He had recourse to French, however, for a short paragraph in which he ventured to state that he had a machine which enabled two persons to communicate their thoughts to each other by an instantaneous and invisible operation.

It was not until the last week of February, 1766, that he repeated this announcement in English, adding that he also showed, at each performance, "his learned mermaid, the enchanted clock, the metals, an operation of caperomancy, the box with figures, the incomprehensible picket, a perpetual magnetic motion, and many others too tedious to mention." In March, he announced that "out of a real sense of gratitude for the kind reception he had met with from the public," he would show "several new operations, never before exhibited by him;" but he did not specify them.

He returned to Paris at the close of his London engagement, the success of which induced him to repeat it the following spring, when he performed in a large room in Great Suffolk Street. There is no information as to his movements between this date and 1770, when he again visited London, performing first at a room in Cockspur Street, and

afterwards near Exeter Change, reducing his charge for admission to half-a-crown. He had now, however, a formidable rival in Jonas, who, though he had appeared almost simultaneously with Comus, had not then obtained so much repute.

The first public performances of Jonas of which I have been able to discover any record were given "at Art's Museum, five doors from Mr. Pinchbeck's, the bottom of the Haymarket." But, as he announced himself as well known to the nobility and gentry, they had probably been given previously at private houses, like those fire-eating feats of which we read in the diary of Evelyn. Like Comus, Jonas did not describe his performances in his public announcements; and, unlike the French conjuror, he charged only half-a-crown for admission.

It is unknown whether Jonas followed his foreign rival to Paris, or made a tour of the provincial towns; but in 1768 we find him performing three times a week at the Angel and Crown, in Whitechapel. Later in the year, he was announced to perform at the Bank Coffee-house; but the exhibition was prohibited by the Lord Mayor. There was, however, another Jonas in the field; and in 1769 the original conjuror of that name challenged his namesake and rival to a public competition by three successive advertisements in the *Gazetteer*. His rival did not

respond publicly, but, as he states in repeating his challenge the fourth time, "took him on a nonplus that he could not be ready." There is no record of the trial of skill having taken place, and the challenge may, like some similar affairs of our own day, have been given only for the purpose of attracting attention to the conjuror's performances.

The original Jonas, now performing "at a large and commodious room at a stationer's, next the Boot and Crown, facing the new buildings by Exeter Change, in the Strand," thereupon advertised himself as "the famous Jonas (who is the real and only Mr. Jonas)." He reduced the admission fee to a shilling, and announced that he would "perform the pidgeon, by giving leave to any gentleman to hang a live pidgeon on a string, and Mr. Jonas will cut the head off by cutting on the shadow, so that the body shall fall on the ground, and the head shall remain on the string. Mr. Jonas will stand at a distance from the live pidgeon, as a surprise to the spectators. Also several other curious deceptions."

These performances were repeated in the following year, at the same place, and during the greater part of 1771 at a room in Chandos Street. In the autumn of that year, Jonas took the house, No. 60, Houndsditch, where, besides attending private

parties, he gave his performances every evening in the drawing-room. The public intimations of them are brief and vague, however being limited to "his amazing dexterity of hand with watches, money, cards, and particularly with a basin of water, never exhibited before in this kingdom; and many other curiosities too tedious to mention."

Early in the following spring, Jonas engaged a room at the corner of Jermyn Street and St. James's Street, and announced that he would exhibit his "astonishing dexterity and deceptions, with his new grand apparatus, which he has lately got from abroad, such as never was attempted before in this kingdom," at the same time raising his price to two shillings. These performances were given twice daily, four days a week, and on Saturday evenings at the conjuror's house in Houndsditch.

At the beginning of 1773, Jonas opened a new exhibition room in James Street, Covent Garden, giving only an evening performance, and raising the admission fee to half-a-crown. The celebrated Breslaw had at this time become a formidable competitor with him for the highest honours of the profession, and conjurors of inferior ability were starting into a brief notoriety, soon to be passed in the race of fame, and driven to exercise their deceptive talent in provincial towns. Whether Jonas

retired from the profession with a fortune, as Fawkes and Pinchbeck had done before him, and Flockton and others after him, I have not been able to discover; but he drops out of the record at this time.

Among the small fry of the profession there was one who called himself Boaz, and another who assumed the name of Cosmopolita, both announcing themselves as having come from Paris. The latter engaged a room in Bow Street, and charged five shillings and half-a-crown for admission; but he proved a failure, and after a few weeks was heard of no more. Another was Ray, who, however, had once the honour of performing before the royal family, of which occasion an amusing anecdote is related. Ray desired the Queen to say *cockalorum* as the charm upon which, as he pretended, the success of his grand deception depended. The Queen hesitated, upon which the King, who was eager to witness the conjuror's great trick, turned to her, and said, good humouredly, "Say cockalorum, Charlotte; say cockalorum."

The social position of the professional conjuror was at this period even more dubious than that of the actor. The prejudice against his art and its professors which had been born of ignorance and superstition was dying out with the process of men-

tal enlightenment; but he was ranked, in common with the juggler, the posturer, and the tumbler, as a vagrant, and in his provincial ramblings was sometimes in danger of being treated in that character with the stocks. He might be patronised by the upper classes, and even by the royal family; but he was not admitted into good society, or even regarded as a respectable character. They were often confounded with fortune-tellers, and suffered in repute by the error.

A newspaper of the period informs its readers, for instance, that "a man in the shameful disguise of a conjuror, with a large wig, a hat of extraordinary size, and an old night-gown on," was committed to prison, charged with having used subtle craft to deceive and impose upon his Majesty's subjects; and adds that "the mischiefs which these impostors cause to the public are as shocking as they are inconceivable, and persons, foolishly desirous of being acquainted with future events relative to themselves, establish a credulity in their own minds, to which nothing appears improbable that these conjurors relate." Two hundred years had elapsed since Scot published his work on diabolism and witchcraft, and more than a century since a translation of Porta's treatise on natural magic appeared; but the human mind had not yet recognised and renounced the errors of its infancy.

CHAPTER VII.

Conjuring Entertainments in the Last Century—Breslaw—The Conjuror and the Mayor—Breslaw's "Last Legacy"—Flockton—Conjurors at the Fairs—Lane—Robinson—Katterfelto—His Black Cat, and its Vanishing Tail—Pinetti and His Book—Clairvoyance Ninety Years Ago—The Conjuror of the Royal Circus—Decremps—Astley as a Conjuror—Invention of the Gun Trick—The Automaton Chess-Player.

The conjuring entertainments which were presented to the wondering eyes of our grandfathers and grandmothers were conducted upon a scale, and in a manner, very different to those of the present day. The conjuror of the last century, though he blew his trumpet as loudly as any prestidigitateur of our own time that ever set up his paraphernalia on the stage of a London theatre, could not hope to obtain audiences large enough to fill Covent Garden theatre, or even the smallest temple of the

dramatic Muses which the metropolis then contained. He hired a first-floor room of some house within a radius of half a mile from Charing Cross, fitted up his stage at one end, procured as many chairs as the room would hold, and lighted it with wax candles. He did not placard the metropolis with large coloured bills, or announce the details of his performance; but was content with advertising his exhibition, often very briefly, in the daily newspapers. More often than otherwise, too, he did not venture to depend for success upon his own performances alone; but interwove them with other entertainments, such as a concert, a mechanical exhibition, or posturing and tumbling feats.

Thus, the celebrated Breslaw informed the public, in one of his earliest announcements, that he had had the honour of appearing lately before their Majesties and the Royal Family, and most of the nobility and gentry, "with universal applause," and that he would exhibit his "astonishing dexterity and deception, in the grandest manner, at his commodious house, the third door from Mr. Pinchbeck's, in Cockspur Street, facing the lower end of the Haymarket." Advertisements in the daily papers conveyed the further information that the room was "prepared with pit and boxes in the most elegant and grand manner," and illuminated

with wax candles. The charge for admission was five shillings and half-a-crown, and the programme comprised "new amazing performances with pocket-pieces, rings, sleeve-buttons, purses, snuff-boxes, swords, cards, hours, dice, letters, thoughts, numbers, watches, particularly with a leg of mutton."

Breslaw, according to Caulfield, was superior to Fawkes, "both in tricks and impudence," of which quality he may be considered to have given a tolerable example when, having promised to give one night's receipts to the poor of Canterbury, where he was then exhibiting his skill, he told the mayor that he had divided the money amongst his company,—for, like his predecessors, he gave a variety entertainment,—"than whom none could be poorer." He once met with a defeat, however, from an unexpected quarter. He was exhibiting a mimic swan, which floated on real water, and followed his motions, when the bird suddenly became stationary. He approached it more closely, but the swan did not move.

"There is a person in the company," said he, "who understands the principle upon which this trick is performed, and who is counteracting me. I appeal to the company whether this is fair; and I beg the gentleman will desist."

The trick was performed by magnetism, and the

counteracting agency was a magnet in the pocket of Sir Francis Blake Delaval.

Breslaw gave his entertainment in Cockspur Street with great success for nine successive seasons; but after 1773 it was sometimes given on alternate evenings at other places,—in 1774, in the large ball-room of the King's Arms, near the Royal Exchange; in 1776, at Marylebone Gardens; and in 1779, at the King's Head, near the Mansion House.

In 1776, Breslaw reduced the admission fee to half-a-crown for all parts of the room in Cockspur Street, and to two shillings at Marylebone Gardens. His conjuring entertainment was at this time interlarded between the first and second parts of a vocal and instrumental concert; and this plan was adhered to in the three following seasons. In 1777 he introduced his "new sympathetical bell, magical clock, and experiments on pyramidical glasses." He was always absent from the metropolis during a portion of each year, when he made a tour of the provincial towns.

After exhibiting his tricks in London for eight years successively, he seems to have found it necessary to apply a stronger stimulus than before to the popular organ of wonder, and in 1779 his announcements gave a fuller view of his performances.

"Between the different parts," says one of his advertisements of this year, "Mr. Breslaw will discover the following deceptions in such a manner, that every person in the company shall be capable of doing them immediately for their amusement. First, to tell any lady or gentleman the card that they fix on, without asking any questions. Second, to make a remarkable piece of money to fly out of any gentleman's hand into a lady's pocket-handkerchief, at two yards distance. Third, to change four or five cards in any lady's or gentleman's hand several times into different cards. Fourth, to make a fresh egg fly out of any person's pocket into a box on the table, and immediately to fly back again into the pocket."

If we add to this announcement one of the programmes of this period, we shall have before us the materials for forming a good idea of the conjuring entertainments of the latter half of the last century.—"1. Mr. Breslaw will exhibit a variety of new magical card deceptions; particularly, he will communicate the thoughts from one person to another, after which he will perform many new deceptions with letters, numbers, dice, rings, pocket-pieces, etc. etc. 2. Under the direction of Sieur Changee, a new invented small chest, consisting of three divisions, will be displayed in a most ex-

traordinary manner. 3. The famous Rossignol, from Naples, will imitate various birds, to the astonishment of the spectators. 4. Mr. Breslaw will exhibit several new experiments on six different metals, watches, caskets, gold boxes, silver machineries, etc. etc."

Breslaw seems to have made a continental tour, or to have unusually prolonged his provincial tour, during the two years preceding 1782, when we find him residing first at No. 57, and afterwards at No. 10, Haymarket, offering to teach the art of legerdemain on reasonable terms, and giving his entertainment on alternate evenings at a room in Panton Street and one in Cornhill, the admission fee at both places being two shillings. The programme was now as follows :—"I. Mr. Breslaw will display many new invented card deceptions, too numerous to insert. II. A satirical lecture on Heads will be delivered by the celebrated Miss Rosomond. III. Two favourite songs, by a young lady; and several deceptions, by a pupil of Mr. Breslaw's. IV. Mr. Breslaw will exhibit a variety of new deceptions with letters, numbers, dice, pocket-pieces, rings, silver medals, gold boxes, caskets, machineries, etc. etc., particularly with a new grand apparatus and experiments, to the astonishment of the spectators."

Breslaw retired from the profession after this season, and in 1784 published his *Last Legacy*, explanatory of his conjuring tricks and apparatus, which he dedicated to Sir Ashton Lever. It appears from his preface that the public mind had received little or no enlightenment on the subject of conjurors and conjuring during the seventy years which had elapsed since the publication of Neve's book; for he observes that "the knowledge which the book conveys will wipe away many ill-grounded notions which ignorant people have imbibed. Some imagine that many deceptions cannot be performed without the assistance of the gentleman of the cloven foot, long since distinguished by the appellation of Old Nick, from whence the original of this amusing science gained the name of the Black Art. Indeed, some ages back, when learning was confined to a few, self-interested and designing persons pretended to enchantment and to hold intelligence with supernatural beings, and, by their skill in chemistry and mathematics, so worked upon the senses that many were brought to believe in conjuration."

Flockton, better known as a successful showman than as a conjuror, used to perform some conjuring tricks on the outside of his show, to attract an audience; and, with Lane, Robinson, and other

small fry of the profession, attended the fairs in and around London for a quarter of a century. In 1769 he gave a variety entertainment for some time at Hickford's Concert Room, Panton Street; but conjuring does not appear to have then been included in his programme. The fees for admission ranged from sixpence to two shillings. The same prices were charged in 1780, when he prefaced an exhibition of *fantoccini* with a conjuring entertainment at a room in the same street, probably the same that was afterwards occupied by Breslaw.

Flockton is said to have been a poor conjuror, but he contrived, by means of his wonderful clock, his *fantoccini*, and his performing monkey, to accumulate five thousand pounds, the whole of which he divided at his death between the various members of his company, who had travelled from fair to fair with him for many years. He died at Peckham, where he always resided in the winter, in 1794. He bequeathed his show, and the properties pertaining to it, to Gyngell, who had latterly performed the conjuring business, and a widow named Flint; but within a year after his death the whole interest in the show was possessed by the former.

Of Robinson, the conjuror, there is no record but the name, which is mentioned in a newspaper report

of the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester to Bartholomew fair in 1778. One of Lane's bills is preserved in Bagford's collection of *notabilia* relating to that fair, now in the library of the British Museum; and his feats are therein shown to have been varied by posturing and dancing by his two daughters. All that can be gathered concerning Lane's tricks, however, is contained in the following morsel of doggrel rhyme :—

"It will make you laugh, it will drive away gloom,
To see how the egg it will dance round the room;
And from another egg a bird there will fly,
Which makes the company all for to cry,
'O rare Lane! cockalorum for Lane! well done, Lane!
You are the man!'"

Another of the conjuring fraternity was Katterfelto, whom Cowper described as—

"With his hair on end at his own wonders,
Wondering for his bread."

He was the son of a Prussian colonel of hussars, and had been travelling as a conjuror on the continent, for sixteen years, and had, according to his own account, the honour of appearing before the Empress of Russia, the Queen of Hungary, and the Kings of Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland, when he made his bow to a London audience, in the spring of 1781, at Cox's Museum, Spring Gardens.

The admission fee here was two shillings for front seats, and one shilling for those at the back.

Katterfelto, whatever his pretensions to skill and dexterity as a conjuror may have been, was the first of the profession, since the time of Faust and Agrippa, to give a philosophical character to his entertainments, and avail of the resources afforded by science for the purpose of illusion. He commenced with a philosophical lecture, which occupied an hour, and was followed by an entertainment of two hours' duration, a different lecture and series of experiments being given on each evening of the week.

His lectures and experiments ranged, according to his advertisement, over the sciences of mathematics, optics, magnetism, electricity, chemistry, pneumatics, hydraulics, hydrostatics, and—to complete the list with some of those hard words in which conjurors delight—proetics, stynacraphy, palenchics, and caprimancy. His scientific knowledge was probably more varied than profound, and some of the sciences of which he discoursed were, comparatively speaking, yet in their infancy. Hydrostatics awaited Oersted, and electricity the experiments of Franklin. But enough was known for the exhibition of many interesting experiments, and Katterfelto may have been able to instruct while he amused his audiences.

Legerdemain, or dexterity of hand, had hitherto been the chief ingredient in the performances of the conjurors of the eighteenth century; but Katterfelto aimed at the achievement of a celebrity peculiar to himself as a revealer of conjuror's secrets, and a *nota bene* to his advertisements of 1781 runs as follows:—"As many ladies and gentlemen lose their fortunes by cards and dice, and the public in general much imposed upon by a person who shows variety of tricks in dexterity of hand by confederacy, Mr. Katterfelto will, after his philosophical lecture, discover and lay open those various impositions, for the benefit and satisfaction of the public."

Katterfelto removed in the summer of 1782 to No. 22, Piccadilly, alleging that there was not light enough in Spring Gardens for the exhibition of his great solar microscope. He at the same time raised his prices by dividing the room into three compartments, the charges for seats in which ranged from one shilling to three shillings. His lecture was now extended over two hours, after which an hour was devoted to "some of his other various arts," including an exposure of the tricks "by which many persons lose their fortunes by cards, dice, billiards, and E. O. table."

Early in the following year, he removed to No.

24, Piccadilly, and combined with the display of the entomological wonders of the microscope the exhibition of a black cat, which he used as much in his advertisements as in the lecture-room. He had recourse very largely to the insertion of paragraph advertisements, which, though he wrote them himself, and paid for their insertion, had the appearance of being items of news, or editorial comments. On one occasion he informed the public, in this manner, that the Queen of France had written to him, requesting to be favoured with a sight of his wonderful cat; on another, that he had presented Marie Antoinette with one of the said cat's progeny. One of his *bonâ-fide* advertisements of this year runs as follows, and explains by its heading the poetical commentary of Cowper, quoted in a preceding page :—

"Wonderful and Astonishing Wonders! Wonders! Wonders! and Wonders! are to be seen THIS DAY by the Solar Microscope, and may also the BLACK CAT have nine times nine lives!

"KATTERFELTO is sorry to find that writers in the newspapers have several times, and particularly within the last fortnight, asserted that he and his BLACK CAT were DEVILS. On the contrary, KATTERFELTO professes himself to be nothing more than a Moral and Divine Philosopher, a Teacher in

Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; and that neither he nor his BLACK CAT bear any resemblance to Devils, as they are represented in the print-shops; and assures the Nobility and Public, that the idea of him and his Black Cat being Devils arises merely from the astonishing performances of KATTERFELTO and his said Cat, which, both in the day's and at the night's exhibition, are such as to induce all the spectators to believe them both to be Devils indeed!—the Black Cat appearing in one instant with a tail, and the next without any, and which has occasioned many thousand pounds to be lost in wagers on this incomprehensible subject."

Though the conjuror's name appears in the foregoing advertisement without a prefix, he more frequently used one, ringing the changes, however, on *Mr.*, *Dr.*, and *Col.* In one, he announced the benefit of the black cat, and many of his advertisements of this year are headed with the wish, "May the Black Cat have nine times nine lives!" In July he performed before the Court at Windsor Castle, George III. being as pleased with a conjuring performance as the youngest members of his family.

Katterfelto continued to perform at the same place throughout 1784, announcing himself, moreover, as the inventor of phosphorus matches, and selling

them, wholesale and retail, at the place of exhibition. In 1785 he made a tour through the provinces, displaying his wonders, in some towns with success, and in others meeting with losses and crosses, and encountering in rural centres the risk of being arrested and imprisoned as a vagrant and an impostor, as once actually happened to him at Shrewsbury.

The next name with which the records of conjuring present us is that of Pinetti, an Italian who came to London in 1784, with the reputation of having performed before several crowned heads on the continent, and received certificates of merit in their royal hand-writing. He engaged the Haymarket theatre for the winter season, and announced, in a larger advertisement than the conjurors of that day were wont to issue, that he would, "with his consort, exhibit most wonderful, stupendous, and absolutely inimitable, mechanical, physical, and philosophical pieces, which his recent deep scrutiny in those sciences, and assiduous exertions, have enabled him to invent and construct: among which Signora Pinetti will have the special honour and satisfaction of exhibiting various experiments of new discovery, no less curious than seemingly incredible, particularly that of her being seated in one of the front boxes, with a handkerchief over

her eyes, and guessing at everything imagined and proposed to her by any person in the company.

This is the first instance which I have been able to discover of what has since received the name of clairvoyance being introduced in a conjuring entertainment, for which purpose it was so much used by Anderson and Robert-Houdin more than half a century afterwards. Considering the slowness with which conjurors seem to have availed of Kircher's invention, perhaps from apprehensions of being regarded as sorcerers, the quickness of Pinetti to turn to account the system to which Mesmer's name has been applied evinces boldness in the adoption of new ideas which few of his professional brethren displayed in their art.

Pinetti, who seems to have been a well-educated man, and was a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Bordeaux, as well as a Knight of the German Order of St. Philip, published, just before Christmas, "at the special request of several amateurs and connoisseurs of distinction," a book explaining thirty-three of his tricks and experiments, those being selected from his programme which, as he states, "not being prejudicial to him, will afford them the greatest amusement and satisfaction." Two editions, English and French, were published, each selling at five shillings, and obtain

able only from the author, who resided at No. 10, Haymarket, the house in which Breslaw lodged two years previously. The "elegant copper-plate engravings" with which it was advertised as illustrated are a frontispiece and a vignette on the title-page, both of an allegorical character, and designed for the glorification of the author.

Pinetti performed several times before George III. and the royal family, and received his Majesty's autograph in a letter of commendation. Early in 1785 he emulated the feat with which Cornelius Agrippa is credited, and anticipated the ingenious artist who constructed the automaton flying trapezist which puzzled visitors to the Polytechnic a few years ago, by producing a life-sized automatic figure, which, in acrobatic costume, performed all the feats of the best rope-dancers of the age.

The season closed on the 4th of February, when the programme was announced as follows:—"Act I. All the most favourite, surprising, and pleasing Philosophical, Physical, and Mechanical Pieces, as well exhibited, as others not yet seen, and which will not fail to affect the minds of the spectators with wonder and admiration. Act II.—The repetition of the prodigious performance of the Rope-dancing Automaton Figure, of the size of a Man! The particulars of which performance, without

inspecting it, (as is confessed by all who have seen it,) being received almost with incredulity, he thinks most proper to leave in silence. Act III. The new, truly most superb, majestic, amazing, and also seemingly incredible grand spectacle of the Venetian Beautiful Fair, which Mechanical Figure, being attired in character, and holding the balance in hands, dances and exhibits upon the Tight Rope, with unparalleled dexterity and agility, and in a manner far superior to any exhibited by the most capital professors, all most difficult and prodigious Feats of Activity, Leaps, Attitudes, Equilibriums, Antics, etc. etc., absolutely beyond imagination and proper description. Signor Pinetti being certain of having never exaggerated in his advertisement, the candid public will, he hopes, as constantly believe him, that he never departs from, but adheres always to truth only."

Pinetti left London shortly afterwards, first reducing the price of the English edition of his book to half-a-crown; and commenced at Paris a successful continental tour. At Easter he was succeeded in London by a conjuror calling himself Signor Spinetti, who was engaged by Hughes to perform at the Royal Circus in the pantomime of *The Talisman of Oresmanes.* Two automatons were introduced in this entertainment, one of which

postured on the tight rope, in the form of a monkey, while the other imitated the singular performances of the famous Learned Pig.

Pinetti's departure from Paris is said to have been hastened by the publication of a work entitled *La Magie Blanche Dévoilée*, an English translation of which appeared immediately afterwards under the title of *The Conjuror Unmasked.* "If," says the preface to the latter, "M. Pinetti ever intended to keep his promise in giving to us *a complete solution of all his tricks*, this book will save him that trouble; and we promise for a certainty that it will operate as a spring to the industry of performers in that art by compelling them to some new inventions to deceive and amuse us." It may be doubted whether Pinetti ever made the promise referred to, having regard to his statement concerning his book, namely, that he had revealed only those secrets of the art the publicity of which would not be prejudicial to him; and the preceding assertion of the translator is probably a mere boast. The author of the book was a Frenchman named Decremps, and it is embellished with a frontispiece representing a conjuror performing the feat of burning a card, throwing the pack into the air, firing a pistol, and nailing the same card to the wall.

Pinetti on leaving Paris, travelled through France

and Italy, performing with great success in all the principal towns. He was in Italy several years, but always avoided going to Rome, where magic was held in horror, and so clever a conjuror as Pinetti could scarcely have avoided arrest by the familiars of the Inquisition, and a long imprisonment. On leaving Italy, he travelled through Austria and Poland; and in 1796 passed into Russia, where he contracted a fever, and died at a village in Volhynia.

The publication of *The Conjuror Unmasked* was followed closely by the appearance of another, entitled *Natural Magic*, which reveals Philip Astley, the famous equestrian, in two characters in which he is not generally known to have appeared, namely, those of a conjuror and an author. The book not only bears his name on the title-page, opposite a poor copy (with only a slight variation of the foreground) of the frontispiece of Decremps; but contains an anecdote of his military experiences, in which he claims to have invented the famous gun trick, with which the name of Anderson was so long associated.

While his regiment was in Germany, two of his comrades quarrelled, and determined to fight with pistols. He acted as second to one of them, and wishing to prevent the effusion of blood, devised a

trick to prevent casualties, and induced the second of the other man to assent to its execution. Tin tubes were made to fit the barrels of the pistols, in which they moved freely; and the bullets were dropped into these tubes upon charges of powder. At the moment of handing the weapons to the duellists, the tubes were dexterously withdrawn, with the balls in them; so that only blank charges were fired. The principals were so dissatisfied with the results, however, that they fired three times at each other before they could be induced to abandon their sanguinary designs, and consider their honour appeased. This incident suggested to Astley his pistol trick, performed in the same manner, and differing from De Linsky's and Anderson's similar performance in the bullet being shown on the point of a knife.

In the same year that the conjuring books of Decremps and Astley were published, namely, 1785, the celebrated automatic chess-player was first exhibited in London, having previously been shown in various cities of Germany and France. It had been invented about fifteen years before by a Hungarian noble, the Baron von Kempelen, who had until then, however, declined to permit its exhibition in public. Having witnessed some experiments in magnetism by a Frenchman named Pelletier,

performed before the Court of Maria Theresa, Kempelen had observed to the Empress that he thought himself able to construct a piece of mechanism the operations of which would be far more surprising than the experiments they had witnessed. The curiosity of the Empress was excited, and she exacted a promise from Kempelen to make the attempt.

The result was the automatic chess-player, which the inventor exhibited six months afterwards, to the admiration and astonishment of the Empress and all the Court. He was urged to exhibit it in public, but declined, refused several liberal offers for its purchase, and even took part of the mechanism to pieces. In this imperfect condition it remained for several years, until, on the occasion of a visit made by the Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his consort to the Austrian Court, the Empress expressed a wish for its exhibition for their gratification. In five weeks it was repaired, and the imperial visitors were so delighted by its performances, that they urged Kempelen to permit its public exhibition, with which request he at last complied.

The automatical character of Kempelen's invention has been doubted; and there were circumstances connected with its exhibition which might

fairly give rise to suspicion. The figure was of the size of life, dressed as a Turk, and seated behind a square piece of cabinet work, two feet and a half high, three feet and a half long, and two feet wide. It was fixed upon casters, so as to run over the floor, and satisfy beholders that there was no access to it from below. On the top, in the centre, was a fixed chess-board, towards which the eyes of the figure were directed. Its right hand and arm were extended towards the board, and its left, somewhat raised, held a pipe.

Four doors, two in the front, and two in the back, were opened, and a drawer in the bottom, containing the chess-men and a cushion, used to support the arm of the figure while playing, was pulled out. Two lesser doors were also opened in the body of the figure, and a candle was held within the cavities thus displayed. The spectators expressing themselves satisfied with this inspection, the exhibitor wound up the machinery, placed the cushion under the arm of the figure, and challenged any gentleman present to play.

The Turk always chose the white men, and made the first move. The fingers opened as the hand was extended towards the board, and the piece was deftly picked up, and removed to the proper square. After a move made by the human

player, the automaton paused for a few moments as if contemplating the game. On giving check to the king, it made a movement with its head. If a false move was made by its opponent, it tapped on the table impatiently, replaced the piece, and claimed the move for itself. If the human player hesitated long over a move, the Turk tapped sharply on the table. At the close of the game, it moved the knight, with its proper motion, over each of the sixty-four squares of the board in turn, without missing one, and without ever returning to the same square.

The mind fails to comprehend any mechanism capable of performing with such accuracy movements which require knowledge and reflection; and various conjectures have been offered as to the means by which the moves of this seeming automaton were made. The accounts of the exhibition suggest human intervention more than they favour the pretensions of the inventor to have produced an automaton, though it is obvious that the operator must have been a dwarf. Beckman says indeed that a boy was concealed in the figure, and prompted by the best chess-player whose services the proprietor could obtain. This is confirmed by Robert-Houdin, who says that the original player was a deformed Russian, named Worousky.

According to Beckman, the player in London was Lewis.

It is to be observed, that the doors were opened separately, and that no variation ever occurred in the order in which they were opened and closed. The machinery was always at rest when shown to the spectators, and carefully concealed from view while in motion, rendering it impossible to ascertain how far it was really connected with the movements of the figure. In winding it up, the key always performed the same number of revolutions, whatever might have been the number of moves made in the course of the game. More than sixty moves were sometimes executed without the mechanism requiring to be wound up, though it was once observed to be wound up when no move at all had been made. All these circumstances seem to be opposed to the supposition that the mechanism possessed any power of governing the movements of the figure, according to the varying conditions of a game of chess; or that it served any other purpose than that of throwing dust in the eyes of the spectators.

On the death of the Baron von Kempelen, in 1819, the automaton was sold to an exhibitor named Maelzel, and again visited London, creating almost as much wonder as it had done thirty-four years

previously. It was observed, however, that the automaton was now frequently defeated, which had never happened in 1785. This circumstance has been held to still further weaken its claim to be really automatic, it being argued that it was less likely that a machine of wood and metal should forget its cunning than that the invisible player of 1819 should be less skilful than his predecessor of 1785. Perhaps, however, its powers were impaired by age. After experiencing many and various changes of fortune, and being owned successively by Napoleon I. and Prince Eugene Beauharnais, the automaton travelled to America, where it realised for its exhibitor even greater profits than it had done in Europe. It perished at length in the fire which consumed the theatre in which it was exhibited in Philadelphia in the summer of 1854.

CHAPTER VIII.

Successors of Pinetti—Henry—Comus—The Vanishing Lady—Melville—Cagliostro—Rollin—A Conjuror on the Scaffold—Comus the Second—Coinage of Hard Words—Another Clairvoyant Conjuror—Improvement of the Magic Lantern—Robert's Optical Illusions—Raising the Dead—Philipstal's Phantasmagoria—Moritz—Bologna—Moon—Elliston and the Conjuror—A Conjuror's Law Suit.

The death of Pinetti furnished a London journalist with a theme for a witticism which, though ill-timed, was conceived in the professional humour of the conjuror. "Poor Pinetti, laid in his coffin, finds death is no conjuror," wrote the humourist; "and that he never suffers to escape, by sleight of hand, the bird which he once confines in his box."

His immediate successors as entertainers of that portion of the British public which delights in the

exhibition of conjuring tricks were Henry and Connus, the former of whom claimed to be the original inventor of inflammable air fireworks, without smoke, smell, or noise, though the nature and composition of this class of pyrotechnics appear to have been known early in the sixteenth century. Henry, who styled himself Professor of Natural Magic, exhibited them, with many other experiments in what may be called the magic of science, at the Lyceum, and afterwards at Astley's Amphitheatre, in 1788. Like several of his predecessors in the profession, he realised a considerable fortune by its exercise.

Connus arrived from Paris in the following spring, and gave, at No. 31, Haymarket, a performance of which I have found no other account than is contained in his advertisements, in which he announced that he would, "by slight of hand, convey his wife, who is five feet eight inches high, under a cup, in the same manner as he would balls; he will also exhibit an infinite number of other tricks too tedious to mention."

He also attended private parties. He afterwards returned to Paris, and repeated his visit to London in the spring of 1790, performing in the same place as before.

Between the two appearances of Connus in Lon-

don, an entertainment was given in the metropolis by John Melville, who, under the assumed name of Scotcianus, undertook to show and explain, or, as he termed it, to expose the manner in which conjuror's tricks were performed. Whether his elucidations were genuine and satisfactory to his audiences, contemporary records do not inform us; but I am disposed, as far as the exercise of the conjuror's art is concerned, to agree with Butler that—

> "The pleasure is as great
> In being cheated as to cheat."

The notorious Giuseppe Balsamo, better known by his assumed name of Cagliostro, and who has been the hero of two or three romances, was about this time performing his mummeries in London, after rendering his name famous, and no less infamous, in almost every other European capital. He was at this time a middle-aged man, having been born in 1743, at Palermo. His parents were in lowly circumstances, but some of the family were in a better position, for he is said to have escaped the penalty of some of his early misdeeds through the exercise of their influence in his favour. He was educated, at first, in the seminary of St. Roch, in his native city; and in his fourteenth year entered, as a novice, a monastery of the Order of Mercy at

Cartagirone, where he was taught the elements of medicine and chemistry by the apothecary.

Having been chastised on several occasions for the mischievous and unseemly pranks which he played upon the monks, he at length absconded, and, returning to Palermo, soon became unfavourably known to the police and the magistrates. From forging orders of admission to the theatre he proceeded to robbing an uncle, for which offence he was prosecuted, but was discharged on the ground of insufficient evidence. He was equally fortunate in escaping the consequences of an accusation of murder; and his forgery of a will, which he committed for a bribe, was not discovered until several years afterwards, when he had left the city.

Growing bolder by impunity, he planned with some of his dissolute acquaintances a fraud of a singular character upon a wealthy goldsmith named Murano, whom he induced to give him sixty ounces of gold by pretending to be able to show him a vast treasure, which he alleged to be concealed in a cave near the city. On the deluded goldsmith going with him to the cave, he performed some mummeries, which Murano supposed to be magical rites, but which were followed by the appearance of Balsamo's accomplices in the guise of demons. By

these fellows the goldsmith was cuffed and cudgelled until he fled, leaving the rogues to laugh at his folly, and divide their ill-gotten gains. Murano vowed revenge, however; and Balsamo learning that, deeming recourse to the laws imprudent, he meditated murder, left the city as secretly as he could, and proceeded to Messina, whence he embarked for Alexandria.

Whatever his views were at this time, he did not remain long in Egypt, but proceeded to Valetta, where he obtained employment in the laboratory of the Grand Master of the Order of Malta. We next find him at Naples, where he married Lorenza Feliciani, a young woman of great beauty, but as profligate as himself. After travelling through Italy and Germany under various names, sometimes assuming the title of count, and sometimes calling himself a physician, but always combining the characters of a conjuror and a quack, he arrived in 1780 at Strasburg, where he pretended to be able to restore the aged to the freshness and vigour of youth. His wife aided the imposture by pretending that she was sixty years of age, and had a son a veteran in the service of Holland, although she was really only in her twenty-first year.

From Strasburg they proceeded to Paris, where they obtained as many dupes as in the capital of

Alsace; but Balsamo, becoming implicated in the affair of the diamond necklace which Cardinal de Rohan wished to present to the Queen, was arrested, and confined for some time in the Bastille. On obtaining his liberation, he was ordered to leave France, and thereupon came to London, where he remained two years. On leaving this country, he proceeded through Switzerland to Italy, where, while residing in Rome, he was arrested and committed to the castle of St. Angelo on the ridiculous charge of being a freemason. So great was the horror in which the Pope and the priests held all secret societies, and which seems as strong at the present day as it was a century ago, that Balsamo was condemned to be imprisoned for life, and died in the fortress of St. Leo in 1795.

Another famous conjuror of this period was Rollin, grandfather of the late political celebrity of that name, who was Minister of the Interior in the Provisional Government of 1848. After accumulating a fortune by the exercise of his profession, and purchasing the château of Fontenay-aux-Roses, in the department of the Seine, Rollin incurred the suspicions of the Committee of Public Safety in 1793, and suffered death by the guillotine. On the warrant for his execution being read to him, he turned to those about him with a smile, and ob-

served, "That is the first paper I cannot conjure away." He left two sons, each of whom, after the fall of Robespierre, planted a cedar in the courtyard of the paternal mansion, where the trees have since grown to magnificent dimensions.

A second Comus—for he can scarcely have been identical with the French conjuror of that name who was contemporary with Jonas—appeared early in June, 1793, at No. 28, Haymarket, as then announced "for one week only," but prolonged his stay for "a few nights more," until the middle of July, charging half-a-crown for admission. He had previously made the tour of the provincial towns with considerable success. His programme was divided into three parts, the first of which consisted of an exhibition of magical watches and sympathetic clocks, and the others of the tricks which now constituted the ordinary *répertoire* of the conjuror; but, after the first week, he condensed the latter into the opening part, exhibited in the second the invisible agent for the interchange of thought which had been a leading feature of the entertainment of the original Comus, and comprised in the third "various uncommon experiments with his Enchanted Horologium, Pyxidees Literarum, and many curious operations in Rhabdology, Steganography, and Phylacteria, with many wonderful per-

formances on the grand Dodocahedron, also Chartomantic Deceptions and Kharamatic Operations. To conclude with the performance of the Teretopæst Figure and Magical House; the like never seen in this kingdom before, and will astonish every beholder."

Comus was a skilful coiner of the hard words so much affected by conjurors, and some of the productions of his mint would puzzle a Cambridge professor of Greek. It may be well, therefore, to inform the reader that his Thaumaturgic Horologium was, as subsequently described by him, a self-acting machine—the only one then existent,—which, "by the means of an Alhadida moving on a Cathetus, discovers to the company the exact time of the day or night by any proposed watch, though the watch may be in any gentleman's pocket, or five miles distant, if required; it also points out the colour of any lady or gentleman's clothes, by the wearer only touching it with a finger, and is further possessed of such occult qualities as to discover the thoughts of one person to another, even at an unlimited distance."

The Pyxidees Literarum is described as "an operation never attempted before by mankind, as follows:—He gives any person in company a sealed letter, together with an empty box; he then desires

them to fix their thoughts on any person's name in the whole world, which being done, a piece of blank writing paper may be burnt to ashes and put into the box ; the letter may then be opened, and there will be found wrote therein the name of the person who was thought on ; also, on opening the box, the ashes will instantly change into paper, with curious writing thereon, which, being read, will incontestably prove that there are possible means of procuring a knowledge of future events."

The Steganographical Operation reminds us of clairvoyance, being described as " the art of imbibing any person's thoughts in an instant, by the assistance of an invisible agent, by which means the Sieur Comus writes in one room any word, sentence, or whole letter which any person shall in another room, and the handwriting so exact that, when compared, it is impossible to distinguish any difference."

The Teretopæst Figure was described as automatic, but, as it appeared on a table, bowed to the audience, and then vanished, reappearing and disappearing any number of times, a yard above the table, the description may be doubted. It may fairly be suspected to have been a child, made to appear in that position and vanish at will by the aid of a concave mirror, which some of the con-

juror's advertisements show him to have possessed.

Comus made a provincial tour during the latter part of the summer and beginning of autumn, returning to the Haymarket in November, when he added to his exhibition the figure of a swan, which swam in water and discovered any name thought of by any person present, without its communication to the conjuror, or even his presence in the room. He also transferred, as if by enchantment, a ring from a lady's finger into a gentleman's snuff-box, from which, on the box being opened, it passed mysteriously into a sealed letter, and, on the letter being opened, to the lady's finger again. He prolonged his stay in the metropolis on this occasion to the end of May, exhibiting during the last month a "marvellous mirror," wherein were seen the cards thought of by any of the spectators.

After a summer tour of the provinces, he returned to the Haymarket again in the first week of November, with—in addition to his former deceptions, including the magic mirror,—the trick of conjuring from a person's hand a guinea, which was immediately found sealed up in seven envelopes, which were locked up in seven iron caskets. The season was brought to a close earlier than

before, however, and Comus did not appear in London afterwards.

Some improvements had, since Kircher's time, been made in the magic lantern. Robert, a French conjuror of the Cagliostro type, introduced the direct shadows of living objects, which imitated the appearance of those objects on a dark night, or by moonlight. An idea of the nature of the *séances* of this modern sorcerer may be formed from an account which appeared in a Paris journal, *L'Ami des Lois*, in 1798.

"I found myself," says the writer, "with some sixty persons in a well-lighted apartment. A pale weazen-faced man entered the room, and, after extinguishing the wax lights, said, 'Citizens, I am not one of those impudent *charlatans* who promise more than they can perform. I have assured the world, through the *Journal de Paris*, that I can raise the dead; and I will raise them. Those of the company present who may desire the reappearance of persons whom they have loved, and whose life has terminated, have but to speak; I will obey their commands.'

"A moment of silence followed, and then a man in great disorder, with bristling hair and sad eyes, said, 'As I have been unable to re-establish the creed of Marat, I desire at least to see his spirit.'

M. Robert then poured upon a lighted brazier two glasses of blood, a phial of vitriol, and two drops of alcohol, and threw on two numbers of the *Journal of Free Men*, whereupon there arose before us, little by little, the phantom of a man of low stature, livid and hideous, armed with a dagger, and wearing on its head the red cap of the Revolution. The man with the dishevelled hair instantly recognised it as Marat, and strove to embrace it; but the phantom gave a hideous leer and vanished.

"A young man desired to see the apparition of a woman whom he had tenderly loved, and showed her miniature to the magician, who threw upon the brazier some swallow's feathers, a dozen dried butterflies, and a few grains of phosphorus. We presently saw the phantom of a young woman, with her hair floating over her shoulders, fixing her gaze upon her lover, and regarding him with a tender and melancholy smile."

Sir David Brewster, in his interesting work on natural magic, has some remarks on the applicability of the concave mirror to the purposes of the magician, which show that Robert's exhibition may have been worked with some such arrangement, and also throw light upon the manner in which the cards were shown by Comus in his magic mirror. "Concave mirrors," he observes, "are distinguished

by their property of forming in front of them, and in the air, inverted images of erect objects, or erect images of inverted objects, placed at some distance beyond their principal focus. If a fine transparent cloud of blue smoke is raised, by means of a chafing-dish, around the focus of a large concave mirror, the image of any highly illuminated object will be depicted, in the middle of it, with great beauty. A skull concealed from the observer is sometimes used to surprise the ignorant; and when a dish of fruit has been depicted in a similar manner, a spectator, stretching out his hand to seize it, is met with the image of a drawn dagger, which has been quickly substituted for the fruit at the other conjugate focus of the mirror."

In 1802, Philipstal produced an exhibition, under the name of the Phantasmagoria, which produced the most startling effects upon the spectators. Sir David Brewster, who witnessed it in Edinburgh, described it as follows:—"The small theatre of exhibition was lighted only by one hanging lamp, the flame of which was drawn up into an opaque chimney or shade when the performance began. In this 'darkness visible,' the curtain rose, and displayed a cave, with skeletons and other terrific figures in relief upon its walls. The flickering light was then drawn up within its shroud, and

the spectators in total darkness found themselves in the middle of thunder and lightning. A thin transparent screen had, unknown to the spectators, been let down after the disappearance of the light, and upon it the flashes of lightning, and all the subsequent appearances, were represented. This screen, being halfway between the spectators and the cave which was first shown, and being itself invisible, prevented the observers from having any idea of the real distance of the figures, and gave them the entire character of aerial pictures.

"The thunder and lightning were followed by the figures of ghosts, skeletons, and known individuals, whose eyes and mouths were made to move by the shifting of combined slides. After the first figure had been exhibited for a short time, it began to grow less and less, as if removed to a great distance, and at last vanished in a small cloud of light. Out of this same cloud the germ of another figure began to appear, and gradually grew larger and larger, and approached the spectators, until it attained its perfect development. In this manner the head of Dr. Franklin was transformed into a skull; figures which retired with the freshness of life came back in the form of skeletons, and the retiring skeletons returned in the drapery of flesh and blood. The exhibition of these transmutations

was followed by spectres, skeletons, and terrific figures, which, instead of receding and vanishing as before, suddenly advanced upon the spectators, becoming larger as they approached them, and gradually vanished by appearing to sink into the ground. The effect of this part of the exhibition was naturally the most impressive. The spectators were not only surprised, but agitated, and many of them were of opinion that they could have touched the figures."

In 1804, the phantasmagoria was exhibited in London by a German named Moritz, who had previously been known as a performer of feats of strength and agility, in conjunction with the posturing of his wife and the acrobatic performances of his children. This entertainment was presented by them at the Royal Circus in the autumn of 1796, and during the winter of the following year at the old Royalty. They then appear to have returned to the continent, but re-appeared at the Royalty, then under Astley's management, in the autumn of 1801.

Moritz made his first appearance in London as a conjuror in the beginning of 1804, when he combined his legerdemain with the posturing and tumbling feats of his family, and concluded it with the exhibition of the phantasmagoria, as already

mentioned. This entertainment was given, by permission of the Lord Mayor, at the King's Arms, Change Alley, Cornhill; and had previously, according to the announcement of the entertainer, been presented before the Court at Windsor Castle, and most of the Courts of Europe.

In the following year, the phantasmagoria was exhibited at the Lyceum, by an Italian named Bologna, who combined it with hydraulic experiments and the exhibition of two automatons, a swan that displayed all the motions of a real bird, and a figure in Turkish costume, that performed conjuring tricks with cards. The optical portion of the entertainment consisted of spectral illusions, and the bills—one of which is preserved in the extensive Banks collection of *notabilia*, in the library of the British Museum,—were embellished with a rude head-piece, representing the conventional ghost rising, with outstretched arms, from a flaming caldron.

Bologna was one of the minor entertainers of that day, whose performances were generally given at public-houses in the provincial towns, and the suburbs of the metropolis. Another of the number was Moon, of whom Raymond tells an amusing anecdote. The conjuror arrived in Salisbury one night, at a very late hour, during Elliston's engage-

ment at the theatre of that city, and took up his quarters at the same inn. Stratford, the manager, had accompanied Elliston to the inn on leaving the theatre, and, after a bottle of wine had been drunk, proposed to call up the landlord to take a hand with them at loo. Moon at that moment entered the room, and was immediately invited to sit down with them.

"I should be most happy to do so, gentlemen," said the conjuror, whom neither of the gentlemen had ever seen before, "but, unfortunately, the state of my purse—"

"Never mind!" cried actor and manager together. "We'll lend you a few guineas."

Moon's hesitation disappeared immediately, and he sat down, expressing the sense which he felt of the kindness and good fellowship of gentlemen to whom he was a stranger. Five guineas were advanced to him to begin with, and play was commenced with exuberant spirits. Elliston and Stratford soon found themselves losers; Moon paid them the five guineas he had borrowed, and still the run of luck was against them. When they rose from the table, neither of them had a guinea left.

"You will give us our revenge?" said Elliston.

"With pleasure!" returned the conjuror.

"I shall be in Salisbury again this day week," observed Elliston.

"I am sorry," said Moon, "to be obliged to disappoint you, but I am engaged that night at Devizes, to cut a cock's head off."

"Cut a cock's head off!" repeated the actor, regarding the conjuror from head to foot. "Have we been playing, then, with a decapitator of the sultan of the dung-hill? Who are you, sir?"

Moon handed a card to Elliston, who read aloud, with his characteristic solemnity of countenance and voice,—"Mr. Moon, *the celebrated conjuror, whose dexterity in command of the cards is unanimously acknowledged, will undertake to convey the contents of any gentleman's purse into his (Mr. Moon's) pockets with surprising facility. He will also cut a cock's head off without injuring that noble bird.*"

As Elliston raised his eyes to the countenance of the conjuror, upon which a faint smile played, the latter bowed, and withdrew from the room, leaving the actor and Stratford regarding each other with looks that cannot be described, and only a Cruikshank could portray.

We must now return to Moritz, who, in the autumn of 1807, terminated at Cambridge a

successful tour of the provinces; and, coming to London, opened a little theatre in Catherine Street, called the Temple of Apollo, with a variety entertainment, consisting of legerdemain, feats of strength and agility, tight rope and slack wire performances, a learned dog and a performing goldfinch, and the phantasmagoria. The conjuring consisted of the usual tricks with cards, the cooking of a pancake in a hat, the burning and restoration of a lady's handkerchief, etc., with which modern wizards have made the public tolerably familiar. The phantasmagorial scenes included representations of the raising of Samuel by the Witch of Endor, the ghost scene in *Hamlet*, the incantation scene in *Macbeth*, and the transformation of Louis XVI. into a skeleton.

The wire performer of Moritz's company during his stay at Cambridge, and for a few weeks after he opened the Temple of Apollo, was a married woman named Price, whose *nom de théâtre* was Signora Belinda. Before coming to London, an agreement was drawn up, whereby Belinda was engaged for three months, at the advanced weekly salary of two guineas and a half; but at the end of the fourth week of this term some dispute arose between them, the precise grounds of which cannot be gathered from the reports of the day, but which,

after an interchange of remarks more vigorous than polite, resulted in the fair wire performer being summarily dismissed.

Belinda, after vainly seeking an engagement at Astley's and the Royalty, obtained one with Mr. Ingleby, the conjuror, who was then performing at the Lyceum. Moritz engaged for the wire performance Lucinda Saunders, probably a daughter of Abraham Saunders, the showman; and Belinda thereupon sued him in the Court of Common Pleas, for damages for wrongful dismissal. The agreement was proved by a clown who had witnessed it, and was not disputed; but it was shown by the evidence for the defence that Belinda had used offensive language, and struck Moritz with her umbrella, and it was urged by the defendant's counsel that she had accepted her discharge by engaging herself to Ingleby. The judge, Sir James Mansfield, held the dismissal to have been justified by Belinda's conduct, and the jury found a verdict for the defendant.

A curious illustration of the lengths counsel will sometimes go in making the most of their client's case was afforded in the course of this trial. Serjeant Best, who defended Moritz, having described the wire performer as a tall, powerful woman, Serjeant Shepherd, who was on the other side, said that Be-

linda was only four feet in height, while the defendant was a man of Heraklean size and strength, and argued from the contrast that the assault could not have been worth mentioning. Moritz then stood up in the court, with a comic gesture, and instead of the Herakles described by Serjeant Shepherd, he was seen to be a man of low stature and slight form.

Belinda is said to have been prompted to this litigation by Ingleby, who had opened at the same time as Moritz, and for some time maintained a warm rivalry with him. Moritz having called himself King of all the Conjurors, and challenged "any man in the world, and especially that *lump of arrogance* at the Lyceum," for three hundred guineas, to imitate his magical deceptions without confederacy, Ingleby assumed the title of Emperor of all the Conjurors, and puffed himself in the newspapers after the manner of Katterfelto.

"The conjuror of Catherine Street," says one of the earliest newspaper criticisms of a conjuring performance which I have been able to discover, "draws, by some magic art, multitudes to his exhibitions. It is astonishing to see the crowds of fashionables who flock every night to the Minor Theatre, where they are pleased with the delusions

practised upon them, and always applaud the more, the less they comprehend." Moritz did not continue the rivalry beyond the spring of 1808, however, after which Ingleby was left for some time in undisputed possession of the field.

CHAPTER IX

Successors of Moritz—Val—Ingleby—Decapitation and Reanimation of a Fowl—Boiling a Fowl, and Restoring it to Life—The Count de Grisy—The Conjuror and the Cardinal—A Page Sawn in Halves—A Fatal Mistake—Cucchiani—The Speaking Head—The Invisible Girl—Gyngell, the Showman—The Gun Trick Again—Fatal Accident to an Indian Juggler—De Linsky—A Terrible Catastrophe.

Ingleby and Moritz had been preceded as conjurors by a Frenchman named Val, who made his first appearance in London in the spring of 1803, at Willis's Rooms, charging seven shillings for admission. One of the journals of the day pronounces him superior to Pinetti; and, though the newspaper critiques of that period were so frequently written to order as to afford no criterion of a performer's ability in his profession, his success may be regarded as some evidence that he was a conjuror of

no mean order. He resided during his stay in London at No. 27, Leicester Square, and attended private parties, including those of Lord Nelson, Lady Mansfield, "where," as a newspaper of the day informs us, "there was a most brilliant circle of fashion and beauty to witness his astonishing experiments," and Sir William Farquhar, at which he had the honour of performing before the Prince of Wales.

When he had been three weeks before the public, it was announced, in a paragraph which reads suspiciously like an advertisement, (and journalists did not bracket the significant "Advt," at the end of such paragraphs in those days,) that he would shortly take his departure for St. Petersburg, where he was said to have an establishment, having obtained a pension from the Czar. But he continued to give his performance, without any reduction of charge, and in the same place for nearly four months afterwards. It is to be presumed, therefore, that he found his venture remunerative.

If the newspapers may be trusted, there can be no doubt of it. "Willis's Rooms," says one of the scribes, "are metamorphosed into the Temple of Fashion, as often as M. Val, surnamed the *Unique*, gives specimens of his most extraordinary art; nor is it astonishing they should become the

favourite lounge of polite society, while this wonder-working man, like a magnet, attracts all to that centre; in effect, it is strictly impossible to form to one's self a correct idea of M. Val's performance, without being a witness of his surprising dexterity; and even then the spectators think themselves transported into fairy-land, and surrounded by all the delusions of inoffensive magic, not knowing which to admire most, the grand variety of deceptions and rare experiments, or the performer's happy talent of exhibiting."

At the close of June, he left London for the continent, and seems to have taken Berlin and Vienna in his route to St. Petersburg, and to have passed the winter in the Austrian capital, purposing to return to London in the spring of 1804. Moritz was the focus of attraction to London seekers of amusement in that season, however, and so continued until his star waned before the rising effulgence of his rival, Ingleby.

Ingleby made his first appearance in London towards the close of 1807, when he engaged the Lyceum, and performed every evening, the admission fee ranging from one shilling to four shillings. He did not present a variety entertainment, like Moritz, but a Miss Young gave a slack wire performance between the parts. He at first assumed

the title of King of all Conjurors, but, on finding that this was borne by Moritz, he issued the following egotistical announcement, early in 1808: —"Mr. Ingleby, the greatest man in the world, most respectfully informs the Nobility, Gentry, and Public in general, that, in consequence of his superior excellence in the Art of Deception, he has had conferred upon him, the last week, the title of Emperor of all Conjurors by a numerous assemblage of Gentlemen Amateurs, and particularly through the amazing trick of cutting a fowl's head off, and restoring it to life and animation, for no man knows the real way but himself."

The trick upon which Ingleby prided himself, and which we have seen in the travelling *répertoire* of the conjuror Moon, was a very simple one. Two cocks, alike in plumage, were used, one of which was held in readiness, but concealed from the spectators, while the other was placed upon the operating table, on which its head was actually severed from the body. Then, while it was being examined by the audience, the body was quickly removed, and the living fowl substituted for it, with its head concealed under its wing. As soon as the head was returned to the table, the conjuror passed it to an attendant, pronounced a few cabalistic words, and slipped the head of

the living bird from under its wing, upon which the cock struggled to its feet. If it crowed, the applause bestowed upon the operator was all the more enthusiastic.

Another feat of Ingleby's was probably performed in an equally simple manner. A fowl was boiled for twenty minutes in sight of the spectators, and, on being taken out of the boiling water, and received a touch of the conjuror's wand it ran round the stage several times, to the amazement of every beholder.

Ingleby, who resided when in London at No. 12, Craven Buildings, Drury Lane, gave private performances at the houses of the nobility and gentry, his charge for which was ten guineas. He made the tour of the provincial towns during the summer, and returned to the metropolis in December, still accompanied by Miss Young, and re-opened the Lyceum for the winter season. Early in 1809, he varied the entertainment by engaging a German rope-dancer, an infant musician, and a whistling man, who imitated the notes of various singing birds, and accompanied the orchestra in an overture. Towards the close of the season, ventriloquism and the musical glasses were added to the programme.

The summer was again passed in the provinces,

and in the first week of October, Ingleby opened the Minor Theatre, (formerly the Temple of Apollo,) Catherine Street, for the winter season, the popularity of his performances continuing unabated. Miss Young repeated her slack wire performance between the parts, and Ingleby advertised himself and her as "the only conjuror and slack wire dancer in the world." This manifest extravagance was shortly afterwards moderated into "the first conjuror, and the first wire dancer in Europe." Early in the following spring, the entertainment was varied by other performances, and he associated with himself in the conjuring business another wizard with the singular *nom de théâtre* of Signior Blue Beard, whose real name I have not been able to discover.

"Mr. Ingleby," says one of his advertisements of this period, "begs leave to observe, that there are numbers of wandering people performing at Bartholomew fair, and some in the Metropolis, and other parts of England, saying they will expose the method of cutting the fowl's head off; yes, for a very good reason, because they cannot do it without exposing it; but if they come to the Minor Theatre, they shall see the Emperor execute it without exposition, in the first style of superlative excellence."

The season terminated in April, and Ingleby again became a wanderer. He does not appear to have visited London again, and the fact of his dying, in the summer of 1832, at Enniscorthy, a small and poor town in Ireland, renders it probable that he was less fortunate, or less provident, than most of the conjuring fraternity, and continued his professional wanderings until his death. He left a young widow, but no children are mentioned in the newspaper announcements of his decease, and it was incidentally mentioned in one of his paragraph advertisements of 1809 that he had then no male issue. The Master Ingleby who took part in the performances in the following year was probably, therefore, a nephew of the conjuror, and may have been the performer who travelled some years afterwards under the extraordinary name of Ingleby Lunar.

An equally clever conjuror of this period, but who never visited London, was Torrini, whose real name was De Grisy, under which he originally appeared. He was the only son of a French loyalist noble, the Count de Grisy, who was ruined by the great political and social revolution of the last century; and, being thrown by the results of that event upon his own resources, studied medicine, and endeavoured to establish himself in that pro-

fession at Florence. Failing in that attempt, he removed to Naples, where he became intimately acquainted with the famous Pinetti, and learned to perform all his tricks and deceptions. Having given several amateur performances, and won great applause from the friends who witnessed them, he was persuaded by Pinetti to give a public exhibition at an entertainment for the benefit of a charity, which was to be attended by the royal family and many of the Neapolitan nobility. This performance, though it was a lamentable failure, was, he always asserted, the cause of his adopting conjuring as a profession.

Pinetti performed most of his feats of legerdemain by the aid of confederates, two or three of whom were among the spectators on this occasion, their assistance having been promised to De Grisy as an encouragement to the undertaking. One of the tricks was the borrowing of a ring, which, after being fired from a pistol, was to be found in the mouth of a fish. From a score of rings offered to him for this purpose, De Grisy selected one of gilt copper, set with paste gems, from one of Pinetti's confederates, to whom it was returned when taken from the fish.

"What is this, signor?" said the confederate, regarding first the ring, and then the performer,

with an air of surprise, sharpened with resentment. "I gave you a gold ring, set with brilliants, and you return me worthless copper and paste."

De Grisy was astounded by this assertion, but concealed his surprise and vexation under the readiest excuse he could devise.

"Be at ease, signor," said he. "Your ring indeed seems to be only gilt copper and worthless stones, but it will return gradually to its proper and original appearance. That is what we call the imperceptible transformation." A more signal discomfiture was to come. There was a card trick, in the performance of which a card was to be "forced," as it is termed, upon the king; and this card, on being drawn from the pack by the royal fingers, was found to be inscribed with an insulting remark. The king, greatly offended, frowned portentously as he tore up the card; and De Grisy, appalled and mortified by this second *contretemps*, rushed from the stage, and ran home. Pinetti then appeared in his place, made an apologetic speech, and continued the performance to its conclusion.

De Grisy always maintained that the disasters of that night had been prepared for him by Pinetti, who feared in him a successful rival, and he declared to Robert-Houdin, many years afterwards, that his

resentment of the Italian's treachery, and his resolve to be revenged, was the motive for his adoption of the profession. He determined to follow Pinetti, and overcome him wherever he performed by the superiority of his own performances. Before he was able to set out on his professional tour, Pinetti had gone from Naples to Lucca, and thence to Bologna. Having ascertained that his next town would be Modena, De Grisy anticipated him there, and, having taken the wind out of the great conjuror's sails, proceeded to Parma. There Pinetti encountered him, and a spirited rivalry ensued, which was continued in the principal cities of Lombardy and Venetia. Pinetti at length left Italy, and his rival proceeded to Rome, where no public conjuring entertainment had ever been given.

On his applying for permission to perform in Rome, he was desired to give a private exhibition before the Pope, and a singular circumstance afforded him the means of giving to this trial performance immense *éclat*. He was one day in a watchmaker's shop, when a gorgeously liveried servant of one of the cardinals then resident in Rome came in for a watch which had been sent there to be repaired. It was a large, old-fashioned watch, made by Breguet, the famous Parisian horo-

logist, and had the cardinal's arms engraved on the back.

"His Eminence," the watchmaker observed to De Grisy, "values it at ten thousand francs; but a young scamp of this city offered me yesterday a perfectly similar watch of the same maker for a tenth part of that sum."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the conjuror, a brilliant idea occurring to him. "If you know where to find that young scamp, I should like to be the purchaser of the watch myself."

The watchmaker had no doubt of his ability to find the scampish possessor of the watch; and the conjuror on the day before his appearance before Pius VII. and a select party of cardinals and officers of the papal household, received a watch which, having had the arms of the aforesaid Cardinal engraved on the back, was a perfect fac-simile of the one in the Cardinal's possession.

De Grisy prefaced his performance by a brief address, designed to show the harmlessness of the "white magic" which he professed; and, after a few simple examples of his art, asked for the Pope's autograph. Pius wrote on a card—"I have much pleasure in stating that M. the Count de Grisy is an able and amiable magician." The card was then made to disappear, and was afterwards found

in a sealed envelope. The conjuror then asked for a watch, and the Cardinal who owned the turnip-like Breguet, and was very proud of it, offered his own.

"Be very careful with it, monsieur," said he, as he handed it to the conjuror. "I prize that watch very highly; it was made by Breguet."

"Your Eminence may rest assured that, whatever I do with the watch, it shall be restored to you in its present condition," returned De Grisy. "Does it go?" he asked after examining it for a few moments; and he held it to his ear, appearing to listen. "It has stopped," he added, and immediately stooping down, he gave it a smart rap on the floor.

"What are you doing, monsieur?" exclaimed the Cardinal, surprised out of his dignity for a moment. "You will injure my watch irretrievably—a watch which I value at ten thousand francs."

"Patience, monseigneur," said De Grisy, in a tone of polite deprecation. "Your watch shall not be injured."

But at the next moment he dropped it into a mortar, and began pounding it with a pestle, the owner fuming visibly, and the Pope seeming to enjoy the rage and vexation which his Eminence strove to repress, but could not conceal. Then the

conjuror dropped some nitrate of strontia into the mortar, and a red glow immediately made the magician's temple resemble a pantomime retreat of kobolds. Presently he ceased to pound, and gazed earnestly into the fiery glow. The Pope, impelled by curiosity, approached the table, and looked into the mortar, but could see nothing but the red fire. De Grisy availed of the opportunity to slip the fac-simile of the destroyed watch into the Pope's pocket.

"Your Eminence's watch has disappeared," said he, gravely addressing the Cardinal, as the red glow faded out. "But I can as easily cause it to re-appear in another place as to vanish from the mortar. Will your Holiness oblige me by feeling in your pocket for it?"

The Pope did so, and produced the watch, the sight of which caused him some mental confusion as well as surprise. He expressed his satisfaction with the entertainment, and on the following day sent De Grisy a gold snuff-box, enriched with brilliants.

De Grisy married a beautiful Italian girl, the sister of his attendant, Antonio Torrini, and shortly afterwards proceeded to Constantinople, where he obtained permission to erect a temporary theatre, and received an invitation to perform before the

Sultan. For this occasion he devised a deception which I believe has not been repeated since. Having borrowed a valuable jewel with which the Sultan Selim had adorned himself, he handed it to his brother-in-law, who attended him in the costume of a page of the Court of Louis XV. While he pretended to prepare for his next trick, the jewel was pocketed by the page, who replied to the conjuror's application for it with a laugh.

"Scoundrel!" cried De Grisy, with simulated rage, "you have stolen the jewel of his Sublime Highness; but you shall suffer for it!"

In another moment the page was thrown down, and thrust into a long box; and the conjuror, kneeling upon the lid, began to saw through the box, while the spectators regarded the scene with a horror mitigated only by the reflection that the seeming murder could not be real. Antonio's groans ceased before the box was sawn through, but the conjuror completed his work, and covered the two halves of the box with a large cone of wicker-work, over which he threw a black cloth, embroidered in silver with cabalistic signs. Bengal lights were then lighted by invisible agency, the cloth and the wicker cone were removed, and the page appeared on the same spot, sound and smiling, with the Sultan's jewel on a salver. But this

was not the only marvel, for he had been multiplied into two, another page, resembling him in height and features, and wearing a similar dress, standing by his side. The second page was the conjuror's wife. The Sultan sent a complimentary letter to De Grisy on the following day, accompanied by the jewel which had figured in the entertainment.

On leaving Constantinople, De Grisy proceeded to Marseilles, but finding that another conjuror, named Ollivier, was giving in the chief towns of France an entertainment comprising his own tricks, he travelled through Switzerland and Germany. For sixteen years he conjured with success in various parts of Europe, but at the end of that time his fame began to wane, and he discerned the necessity of introducing some startling novelty. Unfortunately, he determined to present the gun trick in a new form, himself representing William Tell, and shooting from the head of his son an apple, from which he afterwards took a bullet, supposed by the spectators to be the ball fired from the rifle. He was performing this trick at Strasburg when, by some fearful mistake, the leaden bullet was fired from the gun, and the unfortunate youth fell dead upon the stage.

This horrible event produced temporary insanity in the unhappy conjuror, who recovered his reason

only to undergo his trial for homicide, which resulted in his conviction and six months' imprisonment. His wife died during his incarceration, and the poor conjuror, on his release from prison, would have been friendless and destitute but for the exertions of Torrini. Taking that name to conceal his identity with the convicted homicide, he set out for Basle with as much of his apparatus as had not been sold or pawned during his imprisonment; and, after a short tour in Switzerland, returned to France, and died at Lyons from a fever.

Cucchiani, an Italian conjurer, appeared in London in the autumn of 1814, at an exhibition room in Spring Gardens, which had previously been the *locale* of the automaton chess-player, and other prodigies of art and nature. He performed the usual tricks with cards and coins, and caused a ball to appear black or red at will, and to vanish and return without any visible agency. He revisited London in 1825, accompanied by his wife, and gave a series of performances at the little theatre in Catherine Street, (then called the Harmonic,) which evinced considerable progress on the part of the conjuror during the interval since his former appearance.

He had now a mysterious head, resembling a bust of Napoleon, which answered, in any language,

questions put by any of the spectators. The illusion was probably effected by means similiar to those adopted by Charles in the mystery of the Invisible Girl, aided perhaps by an optical illusion similar to that which helped so largely to mystify the beholders in the case of Stodare's Sphinx. The former illusion, which was exhibited about this time in Paris, was effected by a very simple piece of mechanism, consisting of four wooden uprights, connected by cross rails at the top and bottom, and having bent wires springing from them, and meeting over the centre of the open space within the frame. The wires supported by as many narrow ribbons a hollow copper ball, with which were connected the mouth-pieces of four trumpet-shaped tubes, the mouths of which were directed outward. This was all that was seen by the audience, who were allowed to examine every part of the mechanism. The frame seemed to serve no other purpose than to support the ball, which, and the trumpets, communicated with nothing which could convey sound.

On a question being asked by any person in the room, the lips being close to the mouth of either of the trumpets, an answer was returned from an unknown quarter, the voice resembling that of a child, and distinctly heard by those who listened

at either or all of the trumpets. The invisible speaker could reply in several languages, sang with much taste and skill, and made the most lively and appropriate remarks on persons among the audience. Mysterious as all this seemed, the means by which the illusion was effected were very simple. In two of the upper rails of the frame opposite to the mouths of the trumpets, there were orifices communicating with a tube which entered and descended the upright in which the rails were fixed, and passed under the floor into another room, in which sat the invisible performer, who was not a child, but a clever and well-educated woman. Through a small aperture in the partition she could survey the audience, and make the observations which enabled her to reply to their questions, in the appropriate manner which created so much wonder.

Cucchiani also performed the interesting flower-trick, causing any plant desired by the spectators to grow in a few minutes. Between the parts of his performance his wife recited passages from French comedies, and some juggling and balancing feats were exhibited by a young French lady, named Bisse. Cucchiani resided during this second season in London at No. 8, Spur Street, Leicester Square, and, besides attending private parties, gave lessons in the mysteries of his art.

Cucchiani was succeeded in London, on the occasion of his first visit, by the showman, Gyngell, who has been mentioned in a former chapter as the successor of Flockton. Gyngell gave a variety entertainment at the Ram Inn, West Smithfield, in the autumn of 1815, for one night only, charging one shilling for admission. The programme embraced card tricks and experiments in hydraulics and hydrostatics, performing dogs and birds, tumbling and slack wire feats, and the musical glasses. Early in the following year, when the fair season had not commenced, he engaged the Harmonic Theatre for his entertainment, and remained till the end of March, the admission fee ranging from one shilling to three shillings. During the latter part of the season, the programme was varied by the introduction of *fantoccini*, Chinese shadows, and a panorama of London.

Gyngell afterwards presented this entertainment at the King's Head, Islington, and that once famous place of cockney resort, White Conduit House; and in 1821 appeared, with some of his clever family, at Vauxhall Gardens. Joseph Gyngell, his brother, was a wire-walker of some celebrity in his day; his eldest son, also named Joseph, was a good juggler and balancer; Horatio, his second son, besides being a dancer, was a self-taught

painter of considerable ability; George, the youngest son, was a pyrotechnist; and Louisa, his daughter, a very beautiful young woman, was a graceful tight-rope-dancer.

Gyngell, the showman, died in 1833, and was buried in the parish church-yard of Camberwell, which, two years later, received the remains of his brother. Louisa Gyngell was better known as Madame Louise Irvine, her husband's name being Irving. In 1837 she performed in the pantomime at Covent Garden, where she had the misfortune to fall from the rope, breaking one of her legs, in an ascent from the stage to the gallery.

In 1814 some clever Indian jugglers performed in London, at a room in Pall Mall, and repeated their performances during the three following years in the principal towns of the United Kingdom. One of their feats was the gun trick, in which one of the performers pretended to catch between his teeth a leaden bullet fired from a pistol. By a terrible fatality, the poor fellow lost his life while exhibiting this trick at a place of amusement in Dublin. The pistol was, according to custom, handed to a young gentleman, one of the company, for the purpose of firing; and it seems that the one actually loaded with powder and ball was, by inadvertence, substituted for the weapon prepared

for the trick. The bullet crashed through the head of the unfortunate conjuror, who, to the surprise and horror of all present, fell dead upon the stage.

A similar and yet more sad catastrophe darkened the latter years of the conjuror De Linsky, who enjoyed a considerable repute on the continent at the beginning of the present century. On the 10th of November, 1820, he gave a performance at Arnstadt, in the presence of the family of Prince Schwartzburg-Sondershauser, and wished to bring it off with as much *éclat* as possible. Six soldiers were introduced, who were to fire with ball cartridges at the young wife of the conjuror, having previously rehearsed their part, and been instructed to bite off the bullet when biting the cartridge, and retain it in the mouth. This was trusting too much to untrained subordinates, and the result justified the apprehensions of Madame Linsky, who is said to have been unwilling to perform the part assigned to her in the trick, and to have assented reluctantly by the persuasion of her husband.

The soldiers, drawn up in a line in the presence of the spectators, presented their muskets at Madame Linsky and fired. For a moment she remained standing, but almost immediately sank down, exclaiming, "Dear husband, I am shot!"

One of the soldiers had not bitten off the bullet, and it had passed through the abdomen of the unfortunate woman, who never spoke after she fell, and died on the second day after the accident. Many of the spectators fainted when they saw her fall, and the catastrophe gave a shock to Linsky which, for a time, impaired his reason. He had recently lost a child, and his unfortunate wife was expecting soon to become a mother again when this terrible event deprived her of life.

CHAPTER X.

A New Series of Conjurors—Chalon—Transformation of a Bird into a Young Lady—Cornillot—Comte, the Ventriloquist—Louis XVIII. and the Conjuror—Girardelli—A Novel Nomenclature—The Two Blitzes—Sullivan—Ball—Hoare—Ingleby Lunar—Conjurors at the Fairs—Keyes and Laine—Frazer—Capelli—De Berar's Phantasmagoria—Conjurors in India—Suspension in the Air—The Basket Trick—The Enchanted Water Jar—Magical Transformations.

A NEW series of conjurors commenced towards the close of 1820 with the Swiss professor, Chalon, who then opened the St. James's Theatre, whence he removed in the following year to the Adelphi. His chief deception was the transformation of a bird into a young lady. Between the parts some antipodean feats were performed by an acrobat named Davoust, with a second exhibition of whose agility the entertainment concluded.

Chalon was followed in 1822 by Cornillot, a pupil of the celebrated Pinetti, who engaged the exhibition room in Spring Gardens, charging half-a-crown for admission. He performed only three evenings in each week, combining chemical experiments with feats of legerdemain. In the following spring he removed to the Waterloo Rooms, Pall Mall, reducing his charge to one shilling and two shillings, and performing daily at twelve, one, two, three, and four, and on alternate evenings at eight. "The day and evening exhibitions," his advertisements inform us, "are so arranged as to combine in each performance the most magnificent hydraulic and astonishing chemical experiments, illusions in natural philosophy, and extraordinary feats of dexterity. The much admired Pythoness of Delphos will be introduced, and a variety of amusements never before introduced in this country."

Early in October he opened the little theatre in Catherine Street, as the Theatre of Variety, which was (probably for the first time) lighted with gas, while "a curious revolving gas lantern" was displayed over the entrance. The admission fee ranged at this place from one shilling to three shillings, and the programme comprised, besides conjuring, a dioramic representation of sunrise in the arctic regions, a cycloramic storm and shipwreck, singing

and dancing, and the performances of a Chinese juggler.

Another French conjuror of this period, but who never visited England, was Comte, who was as famous for his ventriloquial powers as for his skill in legerdemain. Many anecdotes are current among continental conjurors of the consternation which Comte created on various occasions by the exercise of his powers as a ventriloquist off the boards. He once overtook near Nevers a man who was beating an overladen ass, and, throwing his voice in the direction of the poor brute's head, reproached the fellow for his cruelty, causing him to stare at the ass for a moment in mingled surprise and awe, and then take to his heels. On another occasion, being in the market-place of Mâcon, he inquired the price of a pig which a peasant woman had for sale, and pronounced it extortionate, a charge which the owner, with much volubility, denied.

"I will ask the pig," said Comte, gravely. "Piggy, is the good woman asking a fair price for you?"

"Too much by half," the pig seemed to reply. "I am measled, and she knows it."

The woman gasped and stared, but she was equal to the occasion.

"Oh! the villain," she exclaimed. "He has

bewitched my pig! Police, seize the sorcerer!"

The bystanders rushed to the spot, but Comte slipped away as quickly as he could, and left the affair to the intelligence of the police.

On one occasion the possession of this strange power was the means of saving Comte's life. He was denounced by some ignorant Swiss peasants in the neighbourhood of Friburg as a sorcerer, set upon and beaten with sticks, and was about to be thrown into a limekiln when he raised such a horrible yell, which appeared to proceed from the kiln, that the fellows dropped him, and fled precipitately from the spot.

On the occasion of his performing before Louis XVIII., he asked the King to draw a card from the pack, at the same time "forcing" the King of hearts, which Louis drew. The card being replaced, and the pack shuffled, Comte presented the King with a card as the one drawn.

"I fancy you have done more than you intended," said Louis with a smile. "I drew the king of hearts, and you have given me a portrait of myself."

"I am right, sire," returned Comte. "Your Majesty is king of the hearts of all your faithful subjects."

He then placed the card in the midst of some flowers in a vase, and in a few moments the bust of Louis rose from the bouquet.

Cornillot was succeeded in London by Cucchiani, as already mentioned, and Girardelli, a nephew and pupil of Chalon, and probably a relative of the famous fire-resisting woman, Josephine Girardelli, who exhibited her wonderful powers in 1814 at a room in New Bond Street. Girardelli performed, during the spring and summer of 1825, in most of the provincial theatres of Great Britain, and at many private parties of the nobility and gentry. He was the first of the profession to introduce in his bills and programmes that sonorous nomenclature which excites the imagination without conveying any suggestion even of its meaning, and which has been so liberally indulged in by the most famous conjurors that have amused the present generation. "The Egyptian Caryatides, or Powers of Bacchus; The Apples of Belzebub; The Box of Paradise; Flora and Bacchus;" are a few examples culled from one of Girardelli's bills.

Among the deceptions of this conjuror were the restoration to life of a dead bird (not Ingleby's trick, but a chemical device); the dancing and speaking coins which answered any questions proposed by the spectators, correctly accompanied any

piece of music, and divined the thoughts of any person present; and the transfer of any article borrowed from the audience to any part of the theatre. He appears to have retired from the profession at the close of the season of 1825, one of his bills having appended to it an intimation that the whole of his apparatus, with his professional secrets, would be disposed of for three hundred guineas.

Cucchiani and Girardelli were succeeded by a rush of conjurors, native and foreign, whose names are now forgotten, and the records of whose entertainments must be sought in collections of bills, such as Bagford's, now in the library of the British Museum, and the larger one made by the late Mr. Lacey, the theatrical bookseller, of the Strand. The first, and probably the best, was the elder Blitz, who came to England with the repute of having performed before several continental courts, and exhibited his dexterity at the Coburg Theatre (now the Victoria) during Lent, 1826.

Early in the following autumn Blitz junior, who had travelled with his father, and assisted him in his performances, appeared at the Rotunda, in Blackfriars Road, and, though a foreigner, and using the prefix of Signor, called himself "the young English necromancer," and, with a corresponding display of ignorance and bombast, declared

that "long experience had proved that his Imperial Cabalistical Powers had entitled him to the appellation of Emperor and Grand Arch Master of all Conjurors." His tricks were of the ordinary kind shown by all conjurors, and concluded with the gun trick, performed with a marked bullet, which, on the gun being fired, he showed in his hand.

Next came Sullivan, an Irish American, who performed in the club-rooms of various public-houses in the metropolis during the autumn and winter, having probably passed the summer in wandering through the provinces from fair to fair. This worthy copied the bills of the younger Blitz, appropriating *verbatim* the whole of the introductory paragraph which has been quoted. He was a clever balancer, but his conjuring tricks comprised nothing that was novel. Of course he burned cards, and restored them; cut off a bird's head, and put it on again; pounded a watch in a mortar, and returned it to the owner uninjured; fired a wedding-ring from a pistol, and brought it back again; and made and cooked a pancake in a hat, without spoiling the *chapeau*: but these tricks were already in the *répertoire* of every conjuror who exhibited at a country fair. Like Blitz, he concluded with the gun trick, but he did it with a knife, after the manner of Astley.

Of the same calibre was Ball, who gave a similar performance, in similar places, at the same period, after wandering through the country during the summer, as testified by his list of aristocratic patrons, which shows him to have performed at Woburn Abbey, Ealing Park, York, etc. The names of Lords Castlereagh and Palmerston appear in this list, which jumbles, in a ludicrous manner, the Duke of Norfolk and Squire Cook, Lord Dundas and T. Smith, Esq., the Archbishop of York and Counsellor Wigester. He styled himself the Sieur Ball, the Autocrat of all Necromancy and Legerdemain, and professed to have been patronised by all the crowned heads of Europe.

Hoare, another conjuror of this class, perambulated the suburbs of London, and the villages within five or six miles, besides performing at private parties, at this time, and for a dozen years afterwards. In 1826 he performed before the Lord Mayor and a large party at the Mansion House, and on various occasions during the two following years he exhibited his tricks at the assemblies of the Duchess of Wellington, the Duke of Argyle, the Earl of Liverpool, and others of the nobility. Besides the ordinary deceptions of his tribe, Hoare threw up a pack of cards, fired a pistol at them, and afterwards showed, pierced with a

bullet, any card previously selected by a spectator.

Ingleby Lunar, who has been incidentally mentioned in a former chapter, was also travelling at this time, and visited all the principal towns in the three kingdoms. He was assisted in his performances by a lady whom he called Madame Lunar, and by several performing birds. His statement that he had performed before most of the European Courts may be doubted, since he never specified them, or gave dates, though he enumerated in his bills the times and places at which he had exhibited his dexterity to many of the nobility, not forgetting a performance before George IV. at the Pavilion, Brighton, in 1825.

He appears to have been entirely uneducated, if we may judge from the following paragraph of a bill issued by him in 1836, when he performed on several successive Tuesday evenings at a public-house in Shoreditch :—

"Mr. I. Lunar, has in modern times acquired more celebrity than any of the ancient Magicians, and rendered himself in those places through which he passed, more famous than Memus-Cyrus, mighty son, or the witch of Endor did in the habitation of old. He has had the honour, since his return from the Continent, to perform at the Universities

of Oxford and Cambridge, at three different periods in each place, the mother of wonder, the nurse that gives suck to the saplings of Genius was pleased to complete by her approbation that fame he is so anxious to immortalize. If Jones had merit,—Penetty astonished—Breslaw pleased—Boax excited wonder—what shall be said of Lunar? who to all the knowledge they possessed adds the inexhaustible combination of his own genius assisted by all the advantages which travel, profundity of thought, and philosophical experiments can give. It is therefore no wonder that a certain Nobleman called him the King of Magic, and a crowned head, wonderfully astonished, pronounced him the total Eclipse of all Conjurors!"

Then there were the Bartholomew fair conjurors, Keyes and Frazer, the former of whom had a partner named Laine, and an Italian named Capelli. The conjuring tricks of the Englishmen were sometimes combined with posturing, tumbling, and rope dancing; while Capelli exhibited, in addition to his feats of legerdemain, a learned dog and a *troupe* of performing cats of remarkable intelligence and docility. This exhibition was subsequently given at the Cosmorama Rooms, Regent Street.

Legerdemain was, for a time, however, thrown into the shade by the optical illusions made

popular by the improvements effected in the magic lantern by Philipstal, and shortly afterwards elaborated by Cross into the apparatus for showing the dissolving views which have since become such a popular entertainment. As applied to the production of the phantom ship in a drama dealing with the weird story of Captain Vanderdecken, the apparatus attracted crowded audiences to the Adelphi Theatre; while the phantasmagorial exhibitions on the plan of Philipstal descended to the fairs, and excited the wonder of the masses. In 1833, they appeared at Bartholomew fair, where a Frenchman named De Berar startled the crowds that flocked to see his *optikali illusio* by the presentation of Death on the pale horse, and various other objects inspiring horror or awe.

There was another phantasmagorial exhibition at a house in Giltspur Street, where the public were invited to witness "the raising of the devil;" and a third in Long Lane.

While the conjuring art seemed to be declining in Europe, Indian conjurors were exhibiting in their own land the marvels which have since attracted wondering crowds to the temples of magic which their imitators have set up in the capitals of the West. The aerial suspension was performed half a century ago at Madras by an old Brahmin, with no

better apparatus than a piece of plank, which, with four legs, he formed into an oblong stool; and upon which, in a little brass socket, he placed, in a perpendicular position, a hollow bamboo, from which projected a kind of crutch, covered with a piece of common hide. These properties he carried with him in a little bag, which was shown to those who went to see him exhibit. The servants of the house held a blanket before him, and when it was withdrawn he was discovered poised in the air, about four feet from the ground, in a sitting attitude, the outer edge of one hand merely touching the crutch, with the fingers deliberately counting beads, and the other hand and arm held up in an erect posture. The blanket was then held up before him, and the spectators heard a gurgling noise, like that occasioned by wind escaping from a bladder or tube, and when the screen was withdrawn he was again standing on the floor or ground.

This performer died at Madras in 1830, without imparting to any one the secret of the trick, which was said, however, by a knowing native, to be effected by holding the breath, clearing the tubular organs, and a peculiar mode of respiration. This explanation is too vague to be satisfactory, besides suggesting the question, Why, then, employ apparatus? The mystery was supposed to have been

solved when Sheshal, called the Brahmin of the Air, exhibited the trick at Madras in 1832. It was observed that his stool was ornamented with two inlaid brass stars, and it was suggested that one of these might conceal a socket for a steel rod passing through the bamboo, and that another rod, screwed to the perpendicular one, and concealed by the piece of hide, might be connected with mechanism of the same metal passing up the sleeve, and down the back, and forming a circular seat. The conjecture was probably not very far from the truth.

About this time also, the Rev. Hobart Caunter, who was travelling in India with some friends, saw the famous basket trick performed in the open air, at a village twelve miles from Madras; and, regarding it as an illusion unprecedented in the annals of juggling, wrote an account of it so graphic and interesting that I cannot refrain from describing it in his own words.

"A stout ferocious-looking fellow stepped forward," he says, "with a common wicker basket of the country, which he begged we would carefully examine. This we accordingly did; it was of the slightest texture, and admitted the light through a thousand apertures. Under this fragile covering he placed a child about eight years old, an interesting little girl, habited in the only garb which nature had

provided for her, perfect of frame and elastic of limb—a model for a cherub, and scarcely darker than a child of southern France. When she was properly secured, the man, with a lowering aspect, asked her some question, which she instantly answered, and as the thing was done within a few feet from the spot on which we were seated, the voice appeared to come so distinctly from the basket, that I felt at once satisfied there was no deception.

"They held a conversation for some moments, when the juggler, almost with a scream of passion, threatened to kill her. There was a stern reality in the whole scene which was perfectly dismaying; it was acted to the life, but terrible to see and hear. The child was heard to beg for mercy, when the juggler seized a sword, placed his foot upon the frail wicker covering under which his supposed victim was so piteously supplicating his forbearance, and to my absolute consternation and horror, plunged it through, withdrawing it several times, and repeating the plunge with all the blind ferocity of an excited demon. By this time his countenance exhibited an expression fearfully indicative of the most frantic of human passions. The shrieks of the child were so real and distracting that they almost curdled for a few moments the whole mass of my blood: my first impulse was to rush upon the monster, and fell him

to the earth; but he was armed and I defenceless. I looked at my companions—they appeared to be pale and paralysed with terror; and yet these feelings were somewhat neutralised by the consciousness that the man could not dare to commit a deliberate murder in the broad eye of day, and before so many witnesses; still the whole thing was appalling.

"The blood ran in streams from the basket; the child was heard to struggle under it; her groans fell horridly upon the ear; her struggles smote painfully upon the heart. The former were gradually subdued into a faint moan, and the latter into a slight rustling sound; we seemed to hear the last convulsive gasp which was to set her innocent soul free from the gored body, when to our inexpressible astonishment and relief, after muttering a few cabalistic words, the juggler took up the basket; but no child was to be seen. The spot was indeed dyed with blood; but there were no mortal remains, and, after a few moments of undissembled wonder, we perceived the little object of our alarm coming towards us from among the crowd. She advanced and saluted us, holding out her hand for our donations, which we bestowed with hearty good-will; she received them with a most graceful salaam, and the party left us, well satisfied with our more than expected gratuity. What rendered the deception

the more extraordinary was, that the man stood aloof from the crowd during the whole performance,—there was not a person within several feet of him."

On another occasion, our author witnessed some clever tricks performed by Indian conjurors before a rajah and the European visitors at his court, the more remarkable of which he describes as follows: —"One of the men, taking a large earthen vessel, with a capacious mouth, filled it with water and turned it upside down, when all the water flowed out; but the moment it was placed with the mouth upwards, it always became full. He then emptied it, allowing any one to inspect it who chose. This being done, he desired that one of the party would fill it; his request was obeyed. Still, when he reversed the jar, not a drop of water flowed, and upon turning it, to our astonishment, it was empty.

"These and similar deceptions were several times repeated; and so skilfully were they managed that, although any of us who chose were allowed to upset the vessel when full, which I did many times, upon reversing it there was no water to be seen, and yet no appearance of any having escaped. I examined the jar carefully when empty, but detected nothing which could lead to a discovery of the mystery. I was allowed to retain and fill it myself, still, upon taking it up, all was void within;

yet the ground around it was perfectly dry, so that how the water had disappeared, and where it had been conveyed, were problems which none of us were able to expound. The vessel employed by the juggler upon this occasion was the common earthenware of the country, very roughly made; and in order to convince us that it had not been especially constructed for the purpose of aiding his clever deceptions, he permitted it to be broken in our presence; the fragments were then handed round for the inspection of his highness and the party present with him.

"The next thing done was still more extraordinary. A large basket was produced, under which was put a lean hungry Pariah female dog; after the lapse of about a minute, the basket was removed, and she appeared with a litter of seven puppies. These were again covered, and, upon raising the magic basket, a goat was presented to our view; this was succeeded by a pig in the full vigour of existence, but which, after being covered for the usual time, appeared with its throat cut; it was, however, shortly restored to life under the mystical shade of the wicker covering. What rendered these sudden changes so extraordinary was that no one stood near the basket but the juggler, who raised and covered the animals with

it. When he concluded, there was nothing to be seen under it; and what became of the different animals which had figured in this singular deception was a question that puzzled us all.

"A man now took a small bag full of trap-balls, which he threw one by one into the air, to the number of thirty-five; none of them appeared to return. When he had discharged the last, there was a pause of full a minute; he then made a variety of motions with his hands, at the same time grunting forth a kind of barbarous chant; in a few seconds, the balls were seen to fall, one by one, until the whole of them were replaced in the bag; this was repeated at least half-a-dozen times. No one was allowed to come near him while this interesting juggle was performed." This feat closely resembles one of those performed by the Bengalee jugglers before Jehangire. After another of the party had swallowed a live snake, and some clever balancing tricks had been exhibited by a woman, a cloth was spread upon the ground; after a minute or two, it gradually rose, and, on its being raised, three pine-apples were discovered growing, and were cut and presented to the spectators.

CHAPTER XI.

A New Era in the History of Conjuring Entertainments—Jacobs, the Ventriloquist and Improvisatore—The Chinese Ring Trick—An Incident of a Tripe Supper—Ink Turned into Water containing Gold Fish—The Inexhaustible Bottle—The Vanishing Page—Suspension by Ether—Imitators of Jacobs—Ching Lau Lauro—Testot—Sutton—The Speaking Automaton—A Young Lady Found in a Pie—Law—Buck—Miller.

The change which commenced about forty years ago in the decorations of the conjuror's temple of enchantment, and the quantity and quality of the apparatus used in the performance of his wonders, marks an epoch in the history of magical entertainments. The conjurors who amused us or our fathers in the first quarter of the present century worked with apparatus and paraphernalia as limited and as simple as those which are shown in the frontispieces of the books of Decremps and Astley,

published in the last quarter of the eighteenth. The conjuror stood in a curtained alcove, behind a table covered with a green cloth, upon which were a pack of cards, a dice-box, a bottle and a funnel, a little box containing hemp or canary seed, an old pistol, and two or three eggs. What display was made by Breslaw, and other masters of the art in the last century, there are no means of ascertaining; but the frontispieces of the books of Decremps and Astley, and the ruder embellishments of the bills of Ball and others, show that the apparatus and decorations used by conjurors before the advent of Anderson and Jacobs were, as a rule, of the simplest description.

Jacobs was a native of Canterbury, and commenced the public exercise of the conjuring profession at an early age, visiting Dover, Brighton, Bath, and other provincial towns during the summer and autumn of 1834. He made what I believe was his first appearance in London in the following spring at the assembly room of the 'Horns Tavern,' Kennington. There was little novelty in the conjuring portion of his entertainment at this time, and it was generally thought that he was a better ventriloquist than a conjuror, his best illusion being the puzzling ring trick, which had been recently introduced into Europe by a Chinese juggler, and

consists in the dexterous manipulation of a number of metallic rings, apparently without any opening in them, but capable of being rapidly separated and re-united in the hands of the conjuror. His ventriloquial powers were of a high order, however, and his improvisation of songs on themes supplied by the audience was an entertainment as novel in this country as it was amusing.

Most of the provincial towns were visited by him during this early period of his career, and in 1839 he had the honour of performing before the Princess Augusta, at a juvenile entertainment given by her royal highness at Brighton. In the following spring, he engaged the large room of the 'Crown and Anchor Tavern,' in the Strand, repudiating the appellation of conjuror or magician, and styling himself an illusionist. "The practice," he observed, "of endeavouring to impose a belief in magic on the credulity of those who witness sleight-of-hand by professors of the art has, notwithstanding the enlightened state of the age, but too long prevailed; and, by throwing into disrepute such absurd attempts, Mr. J. has been enabled on all occasions to afford his patrons the greatest satisfaction." To this repudiation he added the announcement that "the Gun Trick, being a more wonderful than pleasing experiment, which has excited so

much curiosity, though performed in the same simple manner as other sleight-of-hand tricks, will not be introduced in his entertainment."

The performances thus announced were not well attended at first, and, if they were more successful at a later period of the season, that result was due to the entertainer's powers as a ventriloquist and *improvisatore,* rather than to his conjuring, though his tricks of legerdemain were very neatly performed. Jacobs began himself to be convinced that a conjuror is nothing if he only amuses, and fails to inspire wonder. On resuming his provincial rambles, he announced "incomprehensible wonders of ancient necromancy and modern magic," called the place of performance his *Theatre Magique,* and showed upon his stage and operating table signs of the transformation that was in progress.

During this tour an amusing incident occurred. While he was performing at Grantham, he was invited to sup with the members of the local tripe club; and, in the course of the evening, while one of the company was making a long and dull speech, he interrupted it by throwing his voice to the door, and imitating a drunken rustic, who appeared to be endeavouring to force his way into the room, while a waiter was trying to keep him out. The chairman rose and advanced to the door, swearing that

he would throw the fellow downstairs, and stared in ludicrous astonishment on finding nobody there. He returned to the table wondering, but the harangue of the prosy member was brought to an end, and the joke was the source of much merriment during the remainder of the evening.

Jacobs returned to London early in 1841, and gave his entertainment at the Strand Theatre until the commencement of the dramatic season at Easter, when he again betook himself to the provinces. He engaged the Strand for the ensuing winter season, opening at Christmas, when, though he varied his entertainment with the feats of Rousseau, the French equilibrist, and the Patagonian Wonders, he deemed it expedient to style himself the great Modern Magician, and the theatre a Temple of Necromancy, and to make almost as lavish a display of glittering apparatus as had been done by Anderson. His programmes were sprinkled thickly with tricks designated by sonorous and incomprehensible names, such as the Bird of Paradise, the Vases of Divination, the Miraculous Obelisk, Pandora's Box, the Grand Cross of St. John, and the Bottles of Bacchus; and he who had begun by repudiating *hocus pocus*, and even the name of conjuror, now used the language of

mystery, and made a display of the paraphernalia of magic beyond most of his predecessors.

The chief novelty which these performances introduced to London sight-seers was the ring and pistol trick of Torrini, and probably of Pinetti. Disused and forgotten tricks are often revived by conjurors, and offered as new, just as Parisian *modistes* revive portions of the costume of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and call them new fashions; and this is more often done by the most famous and successful of the profession who have studied the history of magic, than by the humble performers at fairs and markets, who seldom know more of the art than they have learned from their instructors.

From this time Jacobs continued to pursue with success the path which had been struck by Anderson, and each recurring season saw his temple of magic more gorgeously decorated, and his apparatus more glittering and elaborate. New deceptions became necessary for the maintenance of his repute, however, and in 1846 he performed the trick of turning ink into transparent water in which gold-fish swam. The trick of producing successively three or four glass bowls of water, containing gold-fish, from beneath a shawl or a cloak, which had been introduced by a Chinese conjuror,

was performed by him four years later, with the addition of afterwards throwing the shawl on the floor, and then, on raising it again, disclosing live ducks or rabbits.

None of this conjuror's tricks were original, indeed, though he performed some which had not been witnessed in this country before. Among the other tricks which he added to his *répertoire* at the same time as the gold-fish deception were the inexhaustible bottle, the vanishing page, and the suspension by ether, as it was called, all of which had previously been performed by Robert-Houdin. Jacobs exhibited these tricks at the 'Horns Tavern,' Kennington, in 1850, and afterwards in Manchester, and other towns in the provinces.

Early in 1853, he again engaged the Strand Theatre, but for twelve nights only, after which he gave his performances for a short time in the little marionette theatre at the Adelaide Gallery. No novelties were produced, and, after another tour in the provinces, Jacobs embarked for America.

Returning to the period of this conjuror's first appearance, we find several imitations of his entertainment, which, though not of the first order, if regarded as an exhibition of legerdemain, afforded an agreeable variety. The juggler who, under the name of Ching Lau Lauro, gave a posturing and

balancing performance in the opening scene of the third act of *Tom and Jerry* at the Coburg, in 1828, appeared seven years later as a conjuror and ventriloquist at the theatres and assembly-rooms of many provincial towns, varying his entertainment with buffo songs. In 1836 he substituted some gymnastic feats for the musical portion of his programme, and concluded his performance by sitting in the air, apparently upon nothing, like the Brahmin of Madras.

Notwithstanding his name, I am as doubtful whether Ching Lau Lauro was a veritable native of the flowery land as I am whether a juggler of the present day, who appears with a brown face and an Oriental garb, is an Asiatic; and another of the profession, with a strangely compounded Anglo-Italian name, who does the Chinese rings trick very dexterously, is an Italian. The desire to seem what they are not clings closely to entertainers of all kinds and degrees, manifesting itself among operatic *artistes* of British birth, who Italianise their names, or prefix foreign forms of address to them, as well as among jugglers and conjurors, acrobats and gymnasts, who delight in foreign names and titles, which many of them are unable to correctly pronounce.

During the summer of 1838, Ching, as he was

usually called, performed at most of the theatres in the north of England, dividing his entertainment into three parts, the first consisting of conjuring tricks, the second of ventriloquism and imitations of birds, and the third of juggling and gymnastic feats, concluding with the aerial suspension. He afterwards made a continental tour, returning to England in the beginning of the following year, when he performed at several places in the suburbs of London.

During the first tour of Ching Lau Lauro as a conjuror, Testot, a French professor of the art, who had gained some repute in his own country, and performed before Louis Philippe, who gave him a certificate of his approbation, came to England, and performed in most of the large provincial towns. The most notable features of his entertainment were the metamorphosis of a bird into a young lady, originally exhibited by Chalon; and the walking and speaking coins, a very simple deception, though one which always creates wonder, and which had been performed ten years previously by Girardelli. He visited this country again in 1843, when he extended his tour to the most northern towns of Scotland.

The Celestial and the Frenchman were succeeded in 1836 by Sutton, who was also a ventriloquist,

but, instead of making his exhibition of the power a distinct portion of his entertainment, as Jacobs and Ching had done, made it subservient to his conjuring deceptions. He had an automaton, which he used to explain and illustrate the oracles of antiquity the responses delivered by himself ventriloquially, appearing to proceed from the figure. His control of the vocal organs was so complete that he could hold a lighted candle before his mouth in this performance without affecting the flame by his breath.

Sutton had little genius for original tricks, which indeed, are rarely produced, and require for their production an amount of study and research which few of the profession can devote to them, and a development of constructiveness which few of them are gifted with; but he displayed tact and ingenuity in devising variations of the great tricks of modern conjurors, and giving them the air of novelty. Thus, he availed of the idea of the popular trick of the inexhaustible bottle in the production of a shower of sweets from a cornucopia; and he varied the vanishing trick by causing a young lady to disappear and afterwards serving her up in an enormous pie.

After performing with success for two years in the provinces, Sutton appeared at the beginning of

1838 at the Strand Theatre, where the juvenile violinists, Viotti and Lindley Collins, gave a musical entertainment between the first and second parts of his programme. In the spring he proceeded to America, and performed for some time at the City Saloon, New York, in conjunction with Strain, the balancer and fire-eater. He made a successful tour of the principal cities of the United States, and then returned to Europe.

Conjurors were springing up at this time as numerously as they had done ten years previously. The advent of Jacobs was followed within three years by the performances of Ching, Testot, Sutton, Law, Buck, Miller, and Anderson. Law, who performed at the London Tavern in 1836, gave a ventriloquial performance between the two parts of his conjuring entertainment. Buck was a Frenchman, who was engaged to perform in a variety entertainment given, during the winter season of 1837, at the Strand Theatre. There was nothing remarkable in the illusions which he presented, which recall the programmes of Breslaw; but the combination of his performances with those of Ramo Samee, the Ravels, and the Collins family afforded an agreeable entertainment.

Buck re-visited England in the summer of 1851, when he had the honour of performing before the

Queen and the royal family, and during that year, and the two following years, performed successfully in the great provincial towns. His programme comprised no startling novelties, but he showed some of the best tricks of his predecessors in a satisfactory manner, including the gun trick, the conversion of ink into water, and the vanishing lady. He performed during this tour one hundred nights in Manchester, sixty in Newcastle, seventy-eight in Hull, and a hundred and forty in Bristol.

Miller, whose strange adventures and vicissitudes were related by himself in his *Life of a Showman*, was a conjuror of the fair-frequenting class during the greater part of his varied life. He relates an amusing anecdote of a failure he once had in performing the common trick of cooking a pancake in a hat. He was performing before a private party at Kelso, and among the company was an elderly gentleman, who sat close to the operating table, and caused some discomposure to Miller and his attendant by the closeness of his observation of their motions, and the grimaces and chucklings in which he indulged whenever he discovered, or thought he had discovered, the mode in which any of the tricks were performed. The pancake trick is done by secretly introducing into the hat a ready cooked and hot pancake in a tin dish, and above

this a gallipot. The batter is prepared, in sight of the spectators, in a similar gallipot, just as much smaller than the other as to fit closely into it. The contents of the smaller gallipot are poured into the larger one, and both are withdrawn together; and the conjuror, after pretending to cook the pancake over a lamp or candle, presents it on the tin dish.

Miller's attendant was so much confused and distracted by the watching, grimacing, and chuckling of the old gentleman that he omitted to place the gallipot in the hat which a gentleman of the party had lent for the purpose, and Miller poured the batter upon the pancake before he discovered the omission. He was not so ready-witted as Robert-Houdin showed himself on similar occasions, nor was his attendant so equal to the emergency as the French conjuror's ministering imp proved in the face of such a disaster. They could only stare in bewilderment at the spoiled hat until Miller, recovering from his confusion, confessed his failure, explained the manner in which the trick is done, and threw the blame upon the inquisitive and chuckling old gentleman.

Proceeding from Kelso to Glasgow, where the fair was about to be held, Miller found Anderson, thereafter to be known as the Wizard of the North, with a large and handsomely decorated show, the

charge for admission to which was sixpence. Miller, whose show was smaller and less pretentious, charged only a penny; and, finding that Anderson intended to perform the gun trick, included that deception in his own programme. His show was crowded at every performance, and at the close of the fair he found himself in possession of seventy pounds, a larger sum than he had ever taken before.

It was the ambition of both the conjurors to become the manager of a theatre, and they attained it a few years afterwards, Miller obtaining possession of the Adelphi, Glasgow, and Anderson building the City Theatre, in the same city. Both were ruined by the speculation; Miller through the want of sufficient capital to carry on the undertaking, and Anderson by the burning of his theatre, as will be related in the next chapter. Miller resumed his wandering life as a conjuror, and died in 1873

CHAPTER XII.

John Henry Anderson—His Early Wanderings and Adventures—A Conjuror's Perils Among the Ignorant—The Wizard's Umbrella—Anderson in a Scrape—Unfortunate Speculation at Glasgow—Burning of the Theatre—An Adventure in St. Petersburg—Second Sight—An Imperial Wizard—A Conjuror's Devices—Exposure of the Spirit-Rappers—The Mask Ball at Covent Garden—Another Conflagration.

John Henry Anderson, who now claims our attention, and who attained a world-wide renown as the Wizard of the North, was born in Aberdeenshire, and was the son of an operative mason. Losing both his parents while a child, he became his own pilot on the voyage of life at the early age of ten years, in the capacity of call-boy to the theatrical company then performing on the northern circuit, under the management of Mr. Ryder. Natural aptitude for the performance of juggling tricks, and for the construction of curious pieces of

mechanism, led him, at the age of seventeen, to adopt the profession of conjuror, his only knowledge of which was derived from an evening's observation of the performance of Ingleby Lunar.

His earliest performances were given in the small towns of the north of Scotland, and his first "hit" was made while performing in the Farmers' Hall, at Brechin, in the spring of 1837. Lord Panmure, who was entertaining a party of friends at Brechin Castle at the time, invited the young conjuror, not only to exhibit his skill to the guests, but to dine with them, an invitation which was the source of much trouble of mind to Anderson, though the result was very much to his advantage. Unacquainted as he was with the code of etiquette adopted by the upper ten thousand, he could scarcely fail to commit many offences against it, and many a laugh has been excited by his recital of the solecisms of which he was guilty during and after dinner. The kindness of his host and hostess, and the polite good humour of their other guests, spared him any serious unpleasantness, however, and his exertions in entertaining the company with all the best tricks of his then limited *répertoire*, were rewarded with a fee of ten pounds and the following flattering testimonial:—

"Sir,—Our party here last night witnessed your performance with the greatest satisfaction; and I have no hesitation in saying that you far excel any other necromancer that I ever saw, either at home or abroad.

"PANMURE."

Anderson was now richer than he had ever been before, and this unexpected accession of capital gave him, in its prudent use, a new impetus on the path of fame. He had already assumed the imposing title of the Wizard of the North, which he afterwards claimed to have received from Sir Walter Scott, and by which he was ever afterwards known. The story is, as told by Anderson himself, that the great novelist said to him, after a performance at Abbotsford, "They call me the Wizard of the North, Mr. Anderson, but the title should be borne by you." But, as Scott suffered his first attack of paralysis at the beginning of 1830, and was a physical and mental wreck from that time until his death in 1832, it is not easy to reconcile this story with Anderson's statement that his performances were confined to the north of Scotland until a period subsequent to his exhibition at Brechin Castle in 1837.

It was a good name to conjure with, however,

and with that on his banner, Lord Panmure's testimonial in his pocket, and new and more elaborate apparatus, Anderson commenced that successful tour of the three kingdoms which preceded his first appearance in the metropolis. He performed a hundred nights at Edinburgh, in the Waterloo Rooms, 1837; and during the two following years visited all the principal towns in Scotland and the north of England, and the chief cities of Ireland. In 1838, after performing forty nights in the Monteith Rooms, in Glasgow, to crowded houses, he erected a building called the Temple of Magic, seated for two thousand spectators, and performed in it for a hundred nights. In the following year, he performed a hundred and twenty nights at the Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh, and then returned to his Temple of Magic at Glasgow, for a season of four months.

Early in 1840, he came to London, and made his first appearance before a metropolitan audience at the Strand Theatre. His programme contained some new tricks, or tricks which appeared in a new garb, like old gems re-set; and was well sprinkled with examples of the Girardellian nomenclature, such as Pluto's Bottle, the Goblets of Ptolomey, the Silver Cups of Herculaneum, the Pompeian Vase, Flora's Bouquet, and the Bottle of Asmodeus.

One of his tricks anticipated by more than thirty years one of the most bewildering, though very simple, deceptions of the so-called spiritual phenomena. He produced a piece of paper, on which three or four gentlemen wrote their names, or any word or sentence, one of them afterwards burning the paper. Anderson then produced a basket of eggs, sprinkled the ashes of the paper over the eggs with the gravity of a mediæval magician, and then requested a gentleman to select an egg from the basket. On the egg being broken, a perfect facsimile of the burned writing was found in the inside.

Another of his tricks savoured of the so-called second-sight. He produced a small box, in which four gentlemen each deposited some small article, unseen by the conjuror. One of them held the box, and Anderson, looking at it through a telescope, described the articles deposited, which were afterwards found in another box, while the one in which they had been placed vanished from the holder's hand. The entertainment closed with the gun trick, of which Anderson claimed to be the sole inventor, though he can fairly be said only to have performed it in a different manner to his predecessors. "The extraordinary mystery of the trick," he said, "is not effected by the aid of any accom-

plice, or by inserting a tube in the muzzle of the gun, or by other conceivable devices, (as the public frequently, and in some instances correctly imagine,) but any gentleman may really load the gun in the usual manner, inserting himself *a marked real leaden ball!* The gun being then fired off at the Wizard, he will instantly produce and exhibit the same bullet in his hand." The bullet was not, however, a "real leaden ball," but one made of an amalgam of tinfoil and quicksilver, which is as heavy as lead, but is dispersed in firing.

Anderson displayed a collection of apparatus larger and more handsome than had ever been witnessed before, and which he described as "a most gorgeous and costly apparatus of solid silver, the mysterious mechanical construction of which is upon a secret principle, hitherto unknown in Europe." During four months Anderson exhibited his marvels to crowded houses, and then removed to the St. James's Bazaar, in St. James's Street, which he converted, at considerable expense, into an elegant little Temple of Magic, in which he performed two months longer. Here he introduced two or three new tricks of a remarkable character. Two ladies stood at opposite sides of the saloon, each holding a small casket. In one of these a wedding ring was placed, and was immediately afterwards found

in the other, before shown to be empty. The caskets were closed again, and on being re-opened the ring had disappeared, to be found in an orange which had been all the time suspended by a ribbon through its centre.

Another was called the Cabinet of Confucius. The conjuror exhibited a cabinet of antique appearance, in which were three drawers and three compartments with glazed fronts. Three cards were taken indiscriminately from the pack, and placed in the upper drawer, from which they were a moment afterwards found to have vanished. The other two drawers were shown to be also empty. They then re-appeared in, and again disappeared from, either of the drawers, at the demand of the spectators; and afterwards, on the doors of the cabinet being closed for a moment, and again opened, one was seen at the glazed front of each of the upper compartments. Then, at a wave of the conjuror's wand, they leaped out of the turrets ornamenting the top of the cabinet. There was a similar, and more bewildering trick, in which figured a handkerchief and one of the little animals (cavies) improperly termed Guinea pigs; but it was so complicated and incomprehensible as absolutely to defy intelligible description.

Early in August, Anderson left the metropolis

for Dublin, and, after a successful season in the Hibernian capital, visited Cork, Limerick, and Belfast. It was in the course of this tour, I believe, that he met with a ludicrous adventure at one of the little inns which the Irish guide-books dignify with the name of hotels. The only portion of his baggage which was taken from the vehicle in which he travelled was a large box containing the rabbits, cavies, and pigeons which lent their aid to his deceptions; and the strange sounds which issued therefrom so puzzled the man who carried it into the house that he felt constrained to relieve his mind by communicating to the hostess the subject of his bewilderment. The conclusion was arrived at that the Sassenach guest was a man of mystery, and the discovery of the inscription, *Great Wizard of the North,* engraved on a silver plate inlaid on the ivory handle of his umbrella, spread consternation and horror throughout the establishment.

The hostler and the chambermaid were admitted to the council, and the common idea of a wizard being the same as when Dame Alice Kyteler was prosecuted for sorcery in the thirteenth century, it was resolved to call to their assistance the parish priest. The reverend gentleman went to the inn, but, having witnessed Anderson's performances during a visit to Dublin, he did not deem the case

one for bell, book, and candle. He failed, however, to convince the ignorant and superstitious people of the inn that their guest was a harmless wizard; no one in the house would venture near Anderson while he remained in it. When his supper was ready, he heard a tap at the door, and on opening it found the tray on the mat, and no one near; when he wished to retire, another tap responded to his summons, and he found on the mat a chamber candlestick and a piece of paper inscribed with the number of his room, which he had to find as he could. His breakfast was served in the same mysterious manner as his supper, and the hostess was probably surprised in an agreeable manner when she found that the money which he left on the table did not burn her hand, nor change in a few days into lead.

Early in the following summer, Anderson again appeared before a London audience, performing for three months at the Adelphi. Several new tricks of a very ingenious character were introduced. In one a silver vase and three silver cups were placed on the table, and a second silver vase, filled with seed, was handed to a spectator. At the conjuror's command the seed disappeared, re-appearing in either of the cups, at the choice of a spectator; disappearing again, to re-appear in

the vase on the table, and then returning to the vase in which it was originally contained.

Another trick was performed with three silver goblets, the first containing comfits, the second empty, and the third filled with water. The first being covered with a silver cover, the water passed from the full goblet to the empty one; and on the cover being lifted from the goblet which had contained the comfits, the confectionery had disappeared, re-appearing in the second goblet, from which the water returned invisibly to its former receptacle. Anderson "rang the changes" in a similar manner with a rabbit and some oranges, using a silver vase and two boxes with sliding drawers; and also with a couple of dice, two silver cases, and five hats borrowed from the spectators.

A campanological performance by the Lancashire bell-ringers varied the entertainment at the Adelphi, and also at Brighton, Southampton, Nottingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and other provincial towns, to which Anderson proceeded on the termination of his London season. He returned to the Adelphi at Easter, 1842, still accompanied by the bell-ringers, and varied his entertainment farther by presenting a concert and a ballet. No new tricks of any importance were introduced in the conjuror's portion of the entertainment

during this season, on the conclusion of which Anderson made another provincial tour.

During this tour he met with a remarkable adventure. One day, towards the conclusion of an engagement at Elgin, he visited Forres, a town twelve miles distant, to make arrangements for repeating his performance there, in the vicinity of the "blasted heath" on which, according to tradition, Macbeth met the witches. Having made the requisite arrangements, he was directed by the printer to the residence of an elderly widow, who had apartments to let, which, proving suitable, were taken for one week.

"Ye'll excuse me, sir," said the widow, when he was about to depart, "but I maun tell ye I'm a puir widow, and a' that I hae to live by is what I get by lettin' my apartments. Ither folk hae engaged 'em, saying I might expect 'em on a certain day; but they didna come, sae I was disappointed. It's an old sayin', that 'burnt bairns dreed the fire.' Ye are a stranger, although a decent lookin' man, and ye may do the same; sae I hope ye winna object to pay half o' the rent aforehand."

Anderson made no objection, but at once handed four half-crowns to the old lady. At that moment he remembered that he must see the printer

again before he left Forres, and, as the day, which had threatened to be a wet one, was fine, he left his umbrella with the widow, whose good opinion the payment in advance of one moiety of the week's rent had quite secured. But, unfortunately, the widow read the words, *Great Wizard of the North* on the handle of the umbrella when Anderson had left her; and he observed, on his return, that she trembled and changed colour as she regarded him intently from head to foot, without venturing to approach him.

"Save us!" she faintly ejaculated. "Wha are ye?"

"I am a rather notorious character," Anderson replied, with a smile, "and I have no doubt, although you have never seen me before, that you have heard of me. My name is Anderson, and I am known as the Wizard of the North."

"A weezard, are ye?" said the affrighted widow. "Then, for the love o' guidness, gang oot o' my house! I wadna lodge ye for ae night under my roof nae for a' the world. For the love o' heaven, gang awa, and tak your umbrella alang wi' ye."

As the Elgin coach was shortly to pass the house, Anderson did not pause to explain or remonstrate, but stepped at once towards the door; when the widow cried, "Stap! Dinna leave ought belanging to ye wi' me; tak your siller wi' ye, and never let me see your face again."

Hastily taking the four half-crowns from her purse, she threw them upon the floor, screaming that they burned her fingers, and immediately fell back in a swoon of terror. In her fall, her head struck a stool, slightly lacerating her cheek; and on several of the neighbours hurrying in, on hearing her scream and fall, they found her bleeding, and apparently lifeless. The women cried out that the stranger had murdered the widow, and the men seized Anderson's arms, to prevent his escape.

At that moment the coach was driven up, and the driver, seeing a crowd about the widow's house, pulled up, and inquired the cause of the commotion.

On being told that a murder had been committed, the guard leaped down, and, looking through the window, recognised Anderson, whom he had seen several times in Elgin. The coach started again, and Anderson, finding that he was in an awkward position, as the old lady gave no signs of life, demanded to be taken before a magistrate at once. This he was told was impossible, as there was no magistrate within seven miles, and all that could be done was to lodge him in the town gaol until the next day.

To the gaol the conjuror was taken, therefore, between a couple of constables, who were commendably prompt in making their appearance. The

coach went on to Elgin, where the guard lost no time in spreading the news of the Wizard's arrest, and, going to the Assembly Rooms, told the audience, who were just growing impatient at the conjuror's non-appearance, that "they might conjure for themselves that night, for there would be no Wizard, as he was where he would not get out with all his magic; he was in Forres gaol, for murdering an old woman." A thrill of horror ran through the crowded auditory; then a murmur arose, and loud demands were made for the return of the money paid at the doors. This was done; and nothing was talked of at Elgin that night but the horrible murder at Forres.

On the following morning, Anderson was conducted to the residence of the magistrate, where the widow, who had recovered in the course of the night, told as much of the tragi-comical story as she knew. The gentleman who administered justice in that remote district smiled at the old lady's narrative, reproved the witnesses for their hastiness, and at once discharged Anderson, with an expression of regret for the inconvenience and loss to which his detention had subjected him. The news of the *dénouement* of the affair reached Elgin as soon as Anderson, for whom it proved an excellent advertisement, bringing crowds to the Assembly

Rooms, and inducing him to prolong his stay in that town several nights beyond the term he had intended.

He re-appeared at the Adelphi at Easter, 1843, with the same *répertoire* as in the preceding year, and still attended by the Lancashire bell-ringers. Towards the close of the season, the entertainment was varied by the vocal performances of the Virginia Minstrels. This was announced as Anderson's last season in London, in consequence of a special engagement in St. Petersburg, and an intended continental tour; but, after a series of performances in the large towns of the north of England, he again returned to the Adelphi at the following Easter, when Mr. Raymond, assisted by his wife and Miss Lindley, gave an entertainment called *An Hour in Ireland* between the parts of the conjuring performances.

Anderson had now realised a considerable fortune, a large portion of which he invested in a theatrical speculation upon which his mind had long been set, namely, the erection of a theatre at Glasgow for dramatic performances. The result was most unfortunate, the theatre being destroyed by fire before its owner had recovered the money he had expended in its construction. Rendered desperate by the heavy loss with which he was

threatened, Anderson, who was only partially insured, would have rushed into the flames, in the hope of saving some of his property, if he had not been restrained. Becoming calmer, he hurried to the bridge, from which he watched the progress of the conflagation until the flames sank to a dull glow for the want of combustible materials to maintain them.

As soon as his mind had recovered its equanimity, he set out for Hull, whence, after performing there with success for several nights, he embarked for Hamburg. From that city he proceeded to St. Petersburg, performing on his way at Copenhagen and Stockholm. Arrived in the Russian capital, he engaged the Alexandrisky theatre, where he had a very successful season.

He had not been long in St. Petersburg when, being one night at a mask ball at the Bolshoi theatre, accompanied by Mr. Maynard, he happened, in the crowd, to jostle a gentleman in the uniform of a Russian general, to whom he immediately offered an apology. It was very coldly received, and Anderson experienced a vague feeling of uneasiness on learning from his companion that the gentleman he had jostled was the Czar, and that he had increased the offence by the apology, it being contrary to Russian court etiquette to address the

Czar on such occasions. He wondered whether he should be arrested on leaving the theatre, or taken from his hotel in the dead of night, clapped into a *kibitka*, and hurried off to Siberia; and when, on the following morning, a letter, sealed with the imperial arms, was brought to him by a gorgeously liveried lacquey, he thought the dreaded moment had arrived.

The letter contained the Emperor's command for a private performance at the Winter Palace, at which the Empress, and all the Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses then in St. Petersburg, were present. Nicholas was more perplexed by the exhibition of the so-called second sight than by any other of the conjuror's feats, and more so than at first after requiring Anderson to describe the watch which he had in his pocket, and being told that it was ornamented with a circle of one hundred and twenty brilliants round the face, and a portrait in enamel of the Emperor Paul at the back, which he acknowledged to be correct. Anderson added, that the watch carried by the Empress did not go, which was also the fact, it being a very old one, a relic of the first Czar Peter, and worn only as a horological curiosity. On the conclusion of the performance, Nicholas examined the conjuring apparatus, expressed admiration of the ingenuity dis-

played in its construction, and, observing that he had in his youth been an amateur conjuror, exhibited a trick which he had learned while travelling among the Khirgis.

On the termination of his engagement in St. Petersburg, Anderson proceeded to Moscow, and afterwards to Vienna, Berlin, and all the principal cities of central Europe. Returning to England, he performed in 1846 at Covent Garden, and in 1848 at the Strand Theatre, with several new deceptions. He had, at the latter period, a formidable competitor in the famous Robert-Houdin, who was performing at the St. James's Theatre, and the rivalry prompted him to the use of extraordinary means of publicity. Having long ago exhausted language in advertising, he now appealed to the eyes of the public by sending through the streets a cavalcade, consisting of four cars covered with coloured bills and pictorial representations of his principal feats, followed by twenty-four men bearing banners, on each of which was a letter three feet high, the series forming the words, "The celebrated Anderson," on one side, and "The Great Wizard of the North" on the other.

He did not attract, however, as he had done before, and terminating his London season earlier than on previous occasions, he set out for the provinces. After visiting most of the large towns,

he embarked at Liverpool for a professional tour of the United States, which he carried out with the greatest success. He terminated a long engagement at the Melodeon, Boston, in October, 1852, afterwards performing one night at the Howard Athenæum in that city, for the benefit of the Scotch Charitable Society, not as a conjuror, but in the character of Rob Roy, in the dramatic version of Scott's romance.

After performing in all the principal cities of the Union, he returned to Europe in the autumn of 1853, and announced a final tour of six months preparatory to his retirement from the profession. Commencing where he had first performed as a conjuror at the outset of his career, he received the command of the queen to give a private exhibition at Balmoral, and proceeded for that purpose to the inn at Crathie, in the vicinity of her Majesty's highland residence. There the superstition of his host involved him in an adventure which must have forcibly reminded him of his imprisonment at Forres eleven years previously. An old man who had known Anderson when a boy, and was aware of the superstitious tendencies of the innkeeper's mind, amused himself by exciting the latter's fears on account of his guest.

"Do ye ken wha yon is?" he inquired in a

mysterious tone, as he directed the innkeeper's attention to Anderson.

"Indeed, na," returned the host. "He'll be ane o' they touring gentlemen come to see the country, I suppose."

"Ye're wrang, mon—ye're wrang," said the mischievous wight. "That's the Great Wizard of the North—no less!"

"Weezard!" exclaimed the innkeeper, dilating his eyes widely as they turned from his informant to the conjuror, and back to the former. "Is it a real weezard ye mean?"

"He is all that," replied the old man gravely. "He can conjure your money out o' your pocket into his own, or turn it into lead wi' a touch; burn a handkerchief, and make it whole again; and do all the maist wonderfu' things that ever ye heard tell o' in your born days. Locks and bolts winna haud him, they say, nor bullets harm him."

"Guidness preserve us!" gasped the innkeeper.

After much cogitation on what he had heard, he resolved to request the wizard to leave the house; but as there was no other inn within a considerable distance, Anderson declined to comply with the request, and resolutely maintained his ground. Not knowing what to do in this situation, the innkeeper was fain to content himself with the precaution of

securing a considerable sum which he happened to have in the house, in notes of the Bank of Scotland, in one of the pillows of his bed. Unfortunately the influx of guests drew so heavily on the resources of the establishment that the chambermaid had to remove one of the pillows from her master's room for the accommodation of a guest, and happened to take the one containing the notes. The innkeeper, on discovering his loss, at once suspected and accused Anderson of having conjured the pillow away, and threatened him with arrest. The chambermaid, on learning the subject of the altercation, remembered the transfer of the pillow, and running to the room to which it had been removed, discovered the notes. An awkward apology followed, and Anderson was allowed to depart.

He closed his performances at Glasgow by engaging the largest hall he could hire for the last night, and giving a silver cup to be competed for by the audience as a prize for the best conundrum. The place was crowded, and, as the collection of conundrums (numbering more than a thousand) was afterwards published, and every contributor probably invested a shilling in the purchase of a copy, Anderson found the device so profitable that he repeated it on several other occasions.

At the close of the summer of 1855 he returned to London, and opened the Lyceum with a programme embracing several novel features. The trick of the inexhaustible bottle was presented in a new form, the contents of the bottle being made to change at will, and the bottle finally proving to be filled with cambric handkerchiefs perfectly dry; the aerial suspension trick illustrated, in appearance, the possibility of sleeping unsupported in the air; and the money of the spectators was made to fall, like the golden shower on the couch of Danäe, into a glass casket suspended in the sight of all, though its lid was closed and locked, and the key was in the possession of a spectator.

But the great attraction was his exposure of the spirit-rapping imposture of the Spiritualists. "It was during my American tour," he stated, in a long announcement of the opening of the Lyceum, "that I became acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism, or pretended communication with the shades of the departed through the agency of table-rapping media. I had an opportunity of seeing the dire effects produced in that country by the belief in a delusion so absurd, yet so fraught with danger. I vigilantly watched the practices of its professors, and marked the fate of many of their dupes. I saw that an imposition which had originated

amongst unprincipled adventurers had become the very religion of the superstitious and credulous; —that it was believed in by tens and hundreds of thousands;—that it was causing to many of its victims a life of nervous agony and mental torture; —that from having been the faith of fools, it had become the fatal folly of many a man of intellect and repute. In the United States alone, the alarming number of seven thousand five hundred lunatics have been sent to the asylums of that country,—lunatics whose lunacy had been wholly caused by their belief in Spiritual Manifestations. To discover the mechanism of an imposture so disastrous in its results I regarded as being my duty, and so successful was I that the exposures I gave were death-raps to the table-rappers in all the cities wherein I had an opportunity to give them. I caused my table to rap as loudly and as intelligently as theirs, while I hesitated not to reveal the nature and *modus operandi* of the 'spirits' which produced its rappings."

This exposure, which was rendered most opportune by the presence in London of some of the most noted media of the United States, who were giving their spiritualistic *séances* in Belgravian drawing-rooms, would have been sufficient of itself to attract crowds to the Lyceum; but Anderson did

not deem it expedient to rely solely upon it, or upon the memory of his former fame. He had been absent seven years from the metropolis, and during that time London sight-seers had witnessed the performances of Robert-Houdin, Hermann, Robin, Frikell, and Bosco. Accordingly he "billed" the dead walls and hoardings of London and the suburbs for weeks before with every form of what I once heard a pretentious bill-sticker term "external paper-hanging." In one place was a simple announcement, in another a lithographic portrait of the conjuror, in a third a series of pictorial representations of his principal tricks. Hostile manifestoes, professing to emanate from the Spiritualists, also appeared on the walls, repudiating all connection with Anderson, and predicting the ultimate triumph of the spirit-rappers.

"The excitement," says the leading journal of the day following the opening of the Lyceum, "was extraordinary. The boxes and stalls were at once filled with a fashionable audience, and the pit barricades were forced in, so that the patrons of this part of the house, inconvenienced by the struggle, began their evening in a somewhat sulky mood, and even threatened a tumult when Mr. Anderson made his appearance. However, after a few words of conversation between the professor and the leaders

of the malcontents, all angry feeling subsided, and never did an entertainment of the sort pass off with more perfect good-humour."

When the Couch of Mesmer, the Casket of Crœsus, and the Bottle of Bacchus had successively excited the wonder of the spectators, Anderson proceeded to the exposure of spirit-rapping. Suspending two glass bells from the ceiling, placing a table on a platform extended across the centre of the pit, and setting up an automaton figure on the stage, he made each in turn answer every question that he put as to the number of letters composing a given word, or the number of pips on a card drawn from the pack. The bells answered by ringing, the table by raps, and the automaton by signs. The means by which the replies were obtained was not stated. Anderson merely informed the audience that they were purely mechanical, and not more so than those employed by the Spiritualists, whom he denounced as impostors. He affirmed that while in New York he had defied a spirit-rapper to get out of the table he had constructed any sound that could not be traced to a natural cause, and that, although he had staked a large sum of money on the result of the challenge, the Spiritualist had failed to elicit any sound at all. This part of the entertainment was distinguished from the rest by

the grave tone with which the conjuror expatiated on the mischief done by pretended spirit media, and was received with applause equally serious.

Towards the close of the season Anderson issued the following amusing "squib" as a means of attracting to the Lyceum those who had not yet witnessed his performances, and at the same time announcing the opening of Covent Garden, which he had engaged for the winter :—

"Beware of the Lyceum! Strange Conduct of Professor Anderson. *To the Women of England!*—Ladies,—We have a complaint to make, which is of a very distressing nature. We are two poor widows,—leastwise, we have no husbands, which is owing to the scandalous behaviour of Mr. Anderson, the wicked Wizard of the Lyceum. Our names are Mrs. Margaret Wilson and Mrs. Dorothy Jones; and our husbands were a trowsers maker, which was Mr. Wilson, and a tin-plate worker, which was Mr. Jones. Last Monday night, we went to the Lyceum playhouse, to see the Wizard we had heard so much talk about, and our husbands paid 2*s.* each, which was paid to the man at the pit door to let us in. With a good deal of scrambling, which pretty nearly spoiled a new dress, which was only bought three weeks ago, we got good seats. We saw a great deal which pleased all of us very

much, and we were astonished that any man could be so clever, as to do things which seemed impossible, but which was done before our very eyesight. Our husbands wanted to know how *this* was done, and how *that* could in any way be; and when some stuff was given by the Wizard out of a bottle, (which we wouldn't have tasted for the world, because we knew it to be poison, or something of that sort), they (which was our husbands) would drink some, and actually said it was good brandy and good rum.

"By-and-by, Mr. Anderson (Professor as they call him, though we don't know whether he professes his wickedness or not) brought forward a large basket sort of thing, which he put on a table. Then he took a pretty little boy, (one of the dearest little fellows, with such sweet curly ringlets), and put him on the table, covered him with a basket, and said some of his gibberish. When he took the basket away, the dear little fellow was gone —Heaven knows where!—though we could see clean under the table. Then he put a boy, and then a girl, and they both went! Our husbands (like stupid stubborn men, as they always were) wanted to see if the Wizard could send them away, and asked to go upon the stage. We persuaded them not to, because we knew something

awful would happen. They persisted, however, like men always will. Mr. Wilson went up first, and was made away with under the basket; and then Mr. Jones went up, and was made away with too, like a foolish man, which he always was. We waited for them to come back, but were horrified to find they didn't. The people were going out, and we supposed our husbands had gone out too; and we went out, and looked for them, but they were not to be found. We went home and waited, but they didn't come, and we both knew they wouldn't stay out of their own accords, which would be as much as his life was worth to Mr. Wilson.

"They never came home all night! In the morning we tried to see the villainous Wizard, but could not. We found him in the afternoon, and he told us he'd see about it. See about it, indeed! — when we have both of us got children— little ones, too young to do anything—and have to look to our husbands for every bit of bread! He gave us a sovereign each, and said it was all right. Well, we waited all Tuesday, and down to three o'clock on Wednesday, and then went again, but could not see him, which was most provoking. On Thursday we did get to see him, and all the horrible man could do to comfort us was to say that he was

very sorry, but that, our husbands had gone down *too far,* and that he didn't know when he could find the time to get them back, being so busy in getting ready his grand pantomime, which he is to open the Covent Garden playhouse at Christmas with, and which he is to give us orders for. This was all very fine, and we told him so; but all the redress we could get was a promise that, until he could find time to get our husbands up again, (poor fellows!—where in the earth are they?) he will pay us a pound a week each to be quiet. Which is all nonsense; because a pound a week isn't a husband, which we say as women who feel what we are saying, and speak our minds.

"What we want is, Ladies, for you to get us justice and our husbands. We have no money to go to law, and we are poor, weak, unprotected women—not exactly widows, which is all the worse. We have got a printer to print this, in the hope that some kind Christian ladies will get us a lawyer, to see us righted. Which is the prayer of, Ladies, yours respectfully,

"Margaret Wilson, 49 Fullwood's Rents, Holborn.
"Dorothy Jones, same place, but second floor."

The conjuror laid down his wand on Christmas Eve, and opened Covent Garden for the dramatic

season on "Boxing-night," to a crowded house. The scenery of Beverley, and the unrivalled pantomimic action of Flexmore and Barnes, made the pantomime a great success. The musical drama of *Rob Roy*, with Anderson as the hero, was played before the pantomime, except for a few nights, when it was displaced for the production of an amusing *pièce de circonstance*, entitled *What does he want?* in which Anderson introduced a portion of his conjuring entertainment, and Mr. Leigh Murray, "made up" as Mr. Charles Mathews, appeared as a rival conjuror, and performed some tricks announced as "entirely his own," and in respect of the performance of which the audience were "requested to order from the nearest dairy a large supply of the 'milk of human kindness.'"

After a highly successful season of sixty nights, which could not be prolonged on account of the theatre being required by Mr. Gye for the Italian opera season, Anderson proposed to give as much *éclat* as possible to its termination by closing with "a grand carnival benefit and dramatic gala," extending over two days and nights, and comprising a conjuring entertainment, an opera, a drama, the pantomime, a burletta, a melo-drama, and a mask ball. Mr. Gye, who was on the continent, forbade the ball as soon as he became aware of Anderson's

intentions, but afterwards gave a reluctant consent on receiving Anderson's remonstrances, and his representation of the cost and forwardness of his preparations.

The entire monster programme was carried out, therefore, and all went off well until the last moment. At a quarter to five on the morning of the 5th of March, 1856, Anderson directed the orchestra to play the national anthem, and the gas-man to lower the gas. As the gas-man proceeded to execute this order, he perceived flames through crevices in the roof, and became aware that fire was raging in the carpenter's shop above. Pieces of plaster and flakes of burning wood fell at the same time among the revellers, and a rush was immediately made for the doors.

A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, but fortunately no lives were lost. The flames spread rapidly, and by seven o'clock nothing remained of the theatre but the bare and blackened walls. Anderson saved the treasury chest, containing the receipts of the two days, but he lost the greater part of his conjuring apparatus, which was insured, however, for two thousand pounds,—a sum short, it was said, of its actual value.

Anderson obtained new apparatus, and repeated at Sadler's Wells, during several weeks of the

following summer, the conjuring entertainment which had been so successful at the Lyceum, and in the provinces. He afterwards went abroad, and did not appear in London again until 1864, when, and in the following year, he presented at St. James's Hall a new entertainment, embracing second-sight, the aerial suspension, and further anti-spiritualistic performances, in antagonism to the notorious Brothers Davenport. In all these additions to his repertory he was assisted by his daughters.

If the Brothers Davenport had come before the public as acknowledged conjurors, their rope-tying feats, and the wonders they performed in their cabinet while they were supposed to be securely bound, would have puzzled the public without exciting opposition or disapprobation; but the latter half of the nineteen thcentury is far too late in the development of the human mind for men to present themselves before a public audience, claiming to perform such tricks by supernatural aid. I have related elsewhere the history of the rope-tying trick, and have only to say in this place that, while Anderson gave a clever *exposé* of the tricks for which the Davenports claimed the character of spiritual phenomena, the rope feat was not satisfactorily performed by Miss Lizzie Anderson, whose sex and youth prevented her from being tied by the

gentlemen who volunteered to secure her in a manner which would have been a test of her ability to extricate herself when tied as male performers of the trick were.

Anderson did not perform in London after 1865. He made another foreign tour, which extended, I believe, to India and Australia; and died about two years ago.

CHAPTER XIII.

Imitators of Anderson—Wizards from all Quarters—Young—De Saurin—Cunningham—Doward—Pennington—Foreign Conjurors in England—Mooty Moodaya—Oriental Conjuring—Louis Döbler—Instantaneous Illumination of Two Hundred Candles—The transfixed Card—The Magician's Kitchen—Philippe Talon—The Gold-Fish Trick—Hermann.

ANDERSON had many imitators, even in the earlier portion of his professional career, as soon as he had achieved distinction. Wizards appeared from every point of the compass, until, finding that their titles availed them little in the absence of the advantages possessed by Anderson, they confessed his superiority by adopting the distinctive title which he had assumed, or pretending to be the Great Wizard, from the Adelphi.

Impostures of this kind are far from unfrequent among the fourth-rate entertainers of every class

who go the round of the provincial music-halls and assembly-rooms. The managers of places of amusement in the country are sometimes deceived themselves, when they are unacquainted with the personal appearance of the performers whom they suppose themselves to be engaging, and respond to the advertisements of the impostors, instead of making engagements through the medium of agents in the metropolis. That there should be two or more entertainers of the same name should not surprise us; but, considering how rarely the professional name is the same as the true patronymic, the fact of one of them being a performer of some eminence may be taken as the motive of the others in adopting the same name.

Conjurors are not so numerous, however, as to be able to assume the name of a distinguished member of the profession without immediate detection; and the frauds which disreputable wonder-workers have, in some instances, committed upon the public, as well as upon a brother practitioner, have been confined to the assumption of his distinctive title, or the piracy of his announcements. The most audacious instance which I have met with is that of a conjuror named Young,—not Mr. Wellington Young, I beg the reader to observe—who was performing before schools and private parties in the

neighbourhood of London, during the time Anderson was making his first tour in Scotland. In the spring of 1840 he performed for a few nights at the Salutation Tavern, at Hammersmith, and then called himself the Enchanter of the East. He was, I believe, tolerably expert in the performance of feats of dexterity; but all his tricks were the same that Anderson was performing at the Strand Theatre, and bore the same names in his bills.

I have not seen an earlier bill of Anderson's, but the fact that Young assumed the title of the Great Wizard of the North during a provincial tour which he made in the following summer may be regarded as sufficient evidence as to which of them was the plagiarist. Young visited Brighton, and other towns in the southern counties, in three successive summers, always bearing his own name, but overshadowing it with the much bolder type in which he announced himself as the Great Wizard of the North, from the Adelphi Theatre, and copying Anderson's bills, even to the introduction of facsimiles of the woodcuts representing the most remarkable tricks, with the negro attendant regarding the conjuror with well-dissembled wonder and admiration.

De Saurin, who styled himself the Wizard of the West, and also performed at Brighton, Worthing,

Portsea, and other towns on the south coast in the summer of 1842, did such of Anderson's tricks as did not require elaborate and costly apparatus, but many of these tricks had been done before Anderson's time, and De Saurin neither assumed the great conjuror's title, nor copied his bills. He did not even perform the gun trick, which Young paraded in his bills, as the great feat which had caused so much sensation in the metropolis.

Another conjuror of this period, named Cunningham, presented the same entertainment, with the addition of the gun trick. So also did Doward, but without the concluding delusion which made Anderson so famous. Both these performers made the circuit of Scotland and the northern counties of England, seldom performing more than two nights in each town or village. The southern counties of England were travelled for several years, with winter visits to the suburbs of the metropolis, by a conjuror named Pennington and his wife, who styled themselves respectively the Wizard of the World and the only Female Illusionist in the World.

Pennington, though he declared himself "quite certain his unrivalled illusions cannot be accomplished by any other professor, whether from the East, the West, the North, or the South," per-

formed no tricks that were not being exhibited at the same time by at least half-a-dozen itinerant conjurors, his programme being the same as Cunningham's, though an air of novelty was sought to be given to it by the use of such terms as Theban occultamacy, Aladdinnic enchantment, Memphian cryptology, exemplified invulnerability, vital vegetation, Frankensteinian project, etc. The only novel feature of his entertainment was a series of *poses plastiques*, presented by himself and his wife.

But between the first appearance of Anderson at the Strand Theatre and the advent of Robert-Houdin at the St. James's the metropolis had been visited by several foreign conjurors of great merit. The first of these was Mooty Moodaya, a native of Madras, who came to England in the summer of 1840, and presented, at the Olympic Theatre, an entertainment of a novel and peculiar kind. Juggling and balancing feats were more prominent in his performance, however, than conjuring tricks; and the third part consisted of a pantomimic sketch called *The Wild Hunter*, in which he represented the hunter, and two other natives of India his followers. Some curious tricks were performed in this sketch by a mongoose. He afterwards exhibited at Southampton, and other provincial towns.

Nearly two years later came Louis Döbler, a young German of prepossessing appearance and gentlemanly manners, who had gained a good repute as a conjuror on the continent, and performed before the Courts of Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. He engaged the St. James's Theatre for his performances in London, and, though unable to speak English, achieved a considerable success. "Herr Döbler," said the critic of the leading journal, "is not one of the common genus of jugglers or conjurors, who, by a series of card, dice, or ball tricks, creates momentary amazement, which vanishes immediately; but his illusions are of such a surprising character that they carry the mind of his audience with him throughout his performance, so inexplicable are the mysteries he practises. He is most pleasing in manner, prepossessing in appearance, and, moreover, is habited in the style which we are taught to believe appertains to those who are supposed to have dealings with familiar spirits. Anderson, 'the Great Wizard of the North,' who figured at the Strand, and who was followed by Jacobs, another celebrated conjuror, was an *artiste*, possessed considerable ability in the transformation of oranges into cocoa-nuts, and could at pleasure and with little assistance, produce a plum pudding from the hat of one of his auditory,

besides standing up as a target, and facing the fire of his deadly enemy; but he was unequal to Herr Döbler. Jacobs can in no manner be compared to him, for though he could extemporise and ventriloquise to increase the mirth of an audience, there was wanting in his magic that finish which gives double effect to that of Herr Döbler."

The German conjuror presented an array of glittering and elaborate apparatus such as had never been seen before, except on the stage occupied by Anderson. On the tables and cabinets on which the cabalistic implements and vessels were arranged stood two hundred wax candles, which, on the rising of the curtain, were unlighted; but on Döbler's appearance, in the costume of a German student of the fifteenth century, and discharging a pistol, they burst simultaneously into illumination. With this sensational introduction, the conjuror proceeded to execute the marvels promised in his programme.

The first that attracted marked attention was the bottle trick, performed in a new mode. Filling a common wine bottle with water, he transformed the water into a collection of the wines of various countries, and poured out a glass of each in succession. Then, when all the wine had been emptied, he broke the bottle, and extracted from it a silk

handkerchief, the property of a gentleman in the pit, who had previously seen it deposited on a table at the back of the stage. A pack of cards was then handed to a gentleman, who, having taken note of one, handed them back to the conjuror, by whom they were flung into the air, and the selected card pierced with a small sword as they fell confusedly towards the stage.

Döbler then obtained a watch from a lady in the stalls, placed it apart, and presented the owner with a ball enveloped in a towel. He then placed an orange in a small silver vase, which stood on one of the tables. The ball was afterwards found in the vase, and the orange in the towel held by the lady; and upon the orange being cut open, the watch was found in it. Two handkerchiefs presented by persons in the stalls were enclosed in vases, and immediately underwent an invisible transit from one to the other. Upon the conjuror firing a pistol, they were found to have both disappeared, and, upon looking up in the direction of his aim, they were seen dangling from the ceiling. Another shot brought them down, almost into their owners' laps.

Döbler's "gipsies' wonder kitchen," a very simple trick, but which, when well managed, never fails to draw immense applause, puzzled the spectators

more than anything else. An iron pot was suspended from a tripod, and several pigeons, prepared for cooking, were placed in it, with sufficient water to boil them. Fire was then applied by means of a spirit lamp placed beneath the pot, and, when the culinary operation was supposed to be completed, the lid was raised, and as many living pigeons flew out of the pot as there had been dead ones placed in it.

Another novel trick was the miraculous washing, in which eight or ten handkerchiefs, borrowed for the occasion, were, to all appearance, immersed in water, put through the process of ablution, and thrown into the rinsing tub. The conjuror then fired a pistol, and, on opening a box on another table, and which had previously been shown to be empty, discovered the handkerchiefs, dried, ironed, and as neatly folded as if they had just come from the laundress. After this came the cornucopia trick, which Döbler performed with an old hat, from which, after first exhibiting it in a state of utter inanity, and trampling it under his feet, he produced an apparently inexhaustible supply of tiny bouquets of flowers, which he threw to the ladies in stalls, pit, and boxes; and with this floral shower brought his entertainment to a close.

Döbler performed before the Queen and the

Royal family at Windsor Castle shortly after his arrival in this country, and on the conclusion of his London season made a successful tour of the principal towns of the midland and northern counties, and extended it to Edinburgh and Glasgow. His last performance at the St. James's Theatre was signalised by the presentation to every occupant of the stalls and boxes of a copy of the following farewell verses, in German and English :—

Forth from my German land I came,
The pilgrim's staff alone I bore ;
Stranger alike in speech and fame,
I sought proud Albion's friendly shore.

Some happy months have passed—I find
Farewell as cordial waits me now
As first I found your welcome kind ;
Let warmest thanks my debt avow.

You judged my humble toil to please
With such a gentle voice and smile,
The stranger scarce were more at ease
If born upon your honoured Isle.

With sorrow then my eye must view
The parting which this night must bring;
And even a tear may gem, like dew,
The latest "floral gifts" I fling.

My hand this charmed verse has traced—
'Tis what my heart must long contain,—
Prayer—in your memories to be placed,
And hope—that we may meet again!

In the summer of 1845, three years after the departure of Döbler, a French conjuror appeared at the St. James's, and afterwards at the Strand, under the name of Philippe. His true name was Philippe Talon, under which he had been, prior to his adoption of the conjuring profession, engaged in the confectionery trade. He was born at Alais, near Nismes, and, going to Paris, as many provincials do, in the hope of making a fortune, or at the worst realising a competency, proved the truth of the adage that "all that glitters is not gold," and betook himself to London. There he was equally unsuccessful, and removed, by a singular choice, to Aberdeen.

It is well known that the Scotch confectioners manufacture quantities of sugared almonds, comfits, etc., far in excess of the requirements of their own country; and Talon soon found that success was precluded by the number of native competitors who possessed more capital. Failure stared him in the face for the third time, and, despairing of success in trade, he resolved to turn conjuror. He was a tolerable performer of ordinary tricks, and

knew that the most brilliant successes of the craft are attained by very simple means. But how was he to get rid of his unsaleable stock of confectionery? After revolving this matter in his mind for some time, he hit upon a capital device.

There was a theatrical company performing in Aberdeen, but drawing so badly that the receipts failed to pay their salaries, and they were, from the manager to the call-boy, in the same plight as the poor Frenchman. Talon proposed that two or three more performances should be given, and that every person entering the theatre should receive with the check a packet of confectionery and a ticket entitling him or her to participate in a lottery drawing for a sum of fifteen pounds. The announcement of this scheme produced crowded houses, and, after the final performance, Talon found that he had cleared off his stock of confectionery, and was the possessor of a sum of money more than sufficient to provide himself with a modest set of conjuring apparatus.

He now assumed the name of Philippe, under which he travelled through Scotland and England, visiting all the principal towns, at first performing only the ordinary tricks of all the itinerant conjurors, but gradually extending his *répertoire*, and improving his manipulation by study and practice. Return-

ing to Scotland in 1840, he erected a temporary theatre in Glasgow for a prolonged stay, after which he made a second tour of the principal towns in the north of England. From Liverpool he proceeded to Dublin, and, while performing in that city, learned the gold-fish trick and the rings puzzle from a Chinese juggler who was exhibiting his feats there at the same time.

In the summer of 1841, he proceeded to Paris, and had a very successful season at the Salle Montesquieu. The repute which he acquired by these performances obtained him an engagement at one of the principal theatres in Vienna, on the conclusion of which he returned to Paris, and gave a second series of performances at the Bonne Nouvelle Bazaar. Among his most remarkable tricks were two which Döbler performed in London shortly afterwards, and which he may have seen the German conjuror perform while in Vienna. This, however, is conjecture only; and it may be that the idea of the tricks in question originated with both conjurors independently.

This is the more probable, as one of them was new only in the manner of its performance, namely, the trick called by Philippe the hat of Fortunatus. The other, which he called the kitchen of Parafaragaramus, was almost identical with the gipsies'

wonder kitchen of Döbler, with the exception that Philippe added vegetables to the contents of the caldron, which, after the pigeons had flown out, was shown to be empty, the water and vegetables having disappeared. Another trick, which seems to have been his own invention, was the borrowing of two handkerchiefs from the audience, which the conjuror, after firing a blunderbuss, found in the inside of two sugar loaves, which had been standing on a table, in sight of the audience, wrapped in the coarse dark paper used by the refiners for packing, as if they had just been brought from a grocer's warehouse.

The chief attractions of Philippe's entertainment in London were the gold-fish trick and a trio of ingeniously contrived automatons. One of the automatons was a miniature Harlequin, who jumped out of a box, smoked a pipe, accompanied the orchestra by whistling, blew out a candle, and assumed a variety of droll attitudes, to the great amusement of the spectators. Worthy companions of the Harlequin were two dolls, attired in the latest fashion, who brought from a toy confectioner's shop everything asked for by the audience, from bonbons to liqueurs, and in lavish profusion.

The gold-fish trick, now exhibited by every conjuror who astonishes London sight-seers at the

Egyptian Hall, was at that time a novelty, not having been performed by Jacobs until five years later. Philippe threw a shawl in the air, to show that it enclosed nothing, and, catching it as it descended, wrapped it round him. In an instant he withdrew it, and discovered at his feet a glass globe, brimful of water, in which four gold fish were swimming. In a few moments the process was repeated, and another bowl, similarly filled, was produced. He then stepped forward to a platform between the orchestra and the stalls, and there discovered a third globe of fish; and returning to the stage, without the least apparent communication with anything or anybody, brought to light, in the same mysterious manner, half-a-dozen live ducks, and, finally, a couple of geese which walked gravely about the stage.

Philippe did not make such a profuse display of glittering paraphernalia as Anderson did, but his deceptions were performed with the neatness and finish that distinguished Döbler's performances, and he was the first conjuror who exhibited with bare arms. He followed the example set by Döbler of appearing in a fancy dress, instead of the evening dress usually worn by conjurors of the nineteenth century; and performed in a gorgeously decorated velvet robe, confined at the

waist by a girdle with fringed ends. Bracelets adorned his wrists, and his head-gear consisted of a tall cone, surmounted by an ornament resembling in form the caudal fin of a fish.

Anderson was preceded at the Adelphi in 1848 by Hermann, a native of Hanover, who styled himself premier prestidigitateur of France, and first professor of magic in the world. He gave a series of morning performances, assisted by his wife, who exhibited the second-sight deception, which was then helping so much to make the fame of Robert-Houdin on the continent. Though this delusion had been exhibited more than sixty years before by Pinetti's wife, it was new to this generation, and proved sufficiently attractive to induce Anderson to include it in his programme at a later period.

Puzzling as it proves to those who are unacquainted with the secret communication maintained with the *clairvoyant* by the Prospero of the occasion, it is really very simple, as will be shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin—Amateur Conjurors and Continental Mountebanks—Carlosbach—Castelli—Robert's Connection with Torrini—The Pancake Trick—Exhibition of the Automaton Penman—Second Sight—Engagement at Brussels—An Unrehearsed Trick on the Frontier—A Card Trick at St Cloud—A Royal Duchess Puzzled—Suspension by Ether—Engagement in London—Transformation of the Queen's Glove—The Conjuror among the Arabs—The Gun Trick—How to draw Blood from a Stone.

Jean Eugène Robert, who must now be introduced to the reader, to whom he is probably better known by the more familiar name of Robert-Houdin, which he assumed on embracing the profession of conjuror, was born in 1805, at Blois, where his father was a watchmaker of good repute. He received his education at the college of Orleans, his father intending him for one of the learned professions; but he displayed much greater aptitude for the construction of puzzle toys and mills turned by mice than for law or medicine, and on leaving the

college, at the age of eighteen, frankly declared to his parents that he would rather be a watchmaker than either an advocate or a physician.

Finding, however, that his father had set his mind on making him one or the other of the latter, he accepted the appointment of clerk to a local solicitor, in whose office, if he did not amuse himself after the manner of Dick Swiveller, he studied mechanical contrivances more than the Code Napoléon. Finding that he had no aptitude for either law or medicine, his father consented to his learning the art and mystery of watchmaking, in which he soon made rapid progress. The bent of his mind received a bias towards magic, however, from witnessing the performances of an itinerant conjuror and mountebank, named Carlosbach; and a book of conjuring tricks coming into his hands by accident soon afterwards, he studied it until he could perform most of them, and had acquired so strong a taste for the practice of legerdemain that he took lessons of a fellow-townsman who united the character of an amateur conjuror with the profession of chiropodist.

When he had acquired a competent knowledge of his father's business, he removed to Tours, and was working there as an operative watchmaker when an accident made him acquainted with the

famous Torrini. Under the influence of the belief that an attempt had been made to poison him, he left Tours abruptly, and hurried towards Blois; but he fell down on the road, became insensible, and on the return of consciousness found himself prostrated by fever and delirium, and in the care of Torrini and his brother-in-law, who had found him lying on the road while on their way to Angers. There seems reason for believing that the attempt to poison him existed only in his imagination, and that he was suffering at the time from the premonitory symptoms of the insanity by which he was attacked a few years afterwards.

Whatever the facts were, he travelled with Torrini for some time, even after he considered himself to have recovered his health and strength, before he returned to Blois. At the fair of Angers he saw a conjuror who, though a native of Normandy, called himself Castelli, and who announced that he would eat a man alive, in view of the spectators assembled in his show. Two victims offered themselves, one of whom was rejected as not being fat enough; the other being in good condition, the Norman smacked his lips, rubbed his hands, produced pepper and vinegar, turned down his victim's collar, and bit the man's neck. The volunteer roared, and leaped off the stage; and the

conjuror, after vainly calling for another victim, expressed, with grave irony, his regret at the unavoidable disappointment of the spectators.

Torrini taught Robert some of his tricks, and employed him in repairing an automaton, an occupation which was congenial to his tastes. When this work was completed, Torrini fell ill, and the young watchmaker found himself constrained by gratitude to remain with him until he was sufficiently recovered to be able to perform. The conjuror's illness continued, however, until his resources were so nearly exhausted that his brother-in-law, the true Torrini, sought counsel of Robert, and it was determined between them that the latter should give a conjuring performance at Aubusson for the benefit of the common treasury.

This was Robert's first public performance, and he escaped a failure only through the presence of mind and readiness of resource of Antonio Torrini. He was performing the common trick of cooking a pancake in a hat, when, either from nervousness, or through his attention being diverted from the culinary operation while talking to the audience, he singed and greased the crown of the hat by placing it in too close contact with the lighted candle over which he was pretending to cook the pancake. On the completion of the operation, he threw the hat

to the side of the stage, and proceeded with his next trick, though horribly perplexed as to what was to be done with the spoiled *chapeau*. Presently he saw Antonio making a sign to him, and received from the Italian his own hat, with a whispered injunction to tell the owner of the spoiled hat to look in the crown, in which a note was pinned, begging him to keep the secret, and promising him a new hat on the following day.

When Torrini was able to perform again, Robert parted company with him, and returned to Blois, where he resumed his occupation of watchmaking. On his marriage with Mdlle. Houdin, the daughter of a Parisian watchmaker, he removed to the capital, where he was employed for several years by his father-in-law. His hankering after the magician's wand displayed itself, however, as strongly as ever. He formed the acquaintance of Comte, the conjuror and ventriloquist, and Roujol, a manufacturer of conjuring tricks and mechanical puzzles, whose shop in the Rue Richelieu was then the rendezvous of all the conjurors who, from time to time, were in Paris. But, before he became famous, either as a conjuror or a mechanist, misfortune came upon him in the form of lingering illness and mental alienation, and reduced him to absolute poverty.

On his recovery, he braced himself manfully to

the task of retrieving his position, and for some time worked hard in devising and constructing automatic figures; and especially the famous automaton penman, for which he was awarded a silver medal by the judges of the Paris Exhibition of 1844. Before he received this recognition of his ingenuity, his wife had died, and he had married again. His success as a mechanist enabled him, in the summer of 1845, to open a Temple of Magic in the Valois Gallery, at the Palais Royal. There, in the following year, he introduced the mystery of second sight, which was exhibited by Emile, his eldest son, now an intelligent lad of fourteen or fifteen.

The difficulty which even the most astute experienced in their endeavours to solve the mystery of this performance added greatly to the conjuror's fame. The public saw a boy seated on the stage, blindfolded, and heard him describe minutely every article which the auditors produced from their pockets, or any portion of their attire which they mentioned; and nobody suspected, in the face of the wonders of mesmeric phenomena, which many eminent medical practitioners were ready to vouch for, that the boy was only the mouthpiece of the keen-eyed conjuror who stood behind him.

The fame acquired in Paris by Robert-Houdin,

which was the name assumed by the conjuror in his professional character, procured him an engagement at the Park theatre at Brussels, at the close of a very successful season at the Palais Royal, and he set out for the Belgian capital with his family. On the frontier an amusing incident occurred. The Belgian officers of customs demanded the duties payable on the conjuring apparatus, and Robert refused payment, contending that it was not merchandise, and, as part of his personal equipment, was exempt from duty.

"But how am I to know that you are telling me the truth?" said the official, regarding him doubtfully.

"Emile," Robert called to his son, who, during the altercation, was amusing himself by the roadside, "convince this gentleman that we are conjurors; tell him what he has got in his pocket."

At the same time, taking advantage of the customs officer's eyes being turned from himself to the boy, he quietly examined the contents of the man's pocket, and telegraphed to Emile the result of the inspection.

"A blue striped handkerchief, a spectacle case, and a lump of sugar," said the boy.

"There!" exclaimed the conjuror triumphantly, "what did I tell you?"

The astounded official expressed himself satisfied that they were conjurors, and allowed the apparatus to pass duty free.

The Brussels engagement proved a failure, however, and resulted in a loss to Robert-Houdin, who had accepted it on the sharing system. On his return to Paris, he re-opened his Temple of Magic for the season of 1847, and added to his programme the trick of the vanishing page, in which Emile was covered with a wicker cone, and, on the firing of a pistol, was found to have disappeared, to appear a moment afterwards at his father's side.

It was during this season that Robert-Houdin performed before Louis Philippe and the royal family of France at the chateau of St. Cloud. On this occasion he devised, and successfully executed, an astounding, but very simple, deception. The King having drawn three cards from the pack, and returned them, the conjuror undertook to convey them, invisibly and instantaneously, either beneath one of the candelabra on the mantel, to the dome of the Invalides, or the box of the last orange-tree on the right of the avenue. Louis Philippe, as the conjuror had foreseen, chose that the cards should be conveyed to the last-mentioned place, observing that the mantel was too near, and the Invalides inconveniently distant. An attendant was then

despatched to the orangery, and a gardener called to search for the cards, which were found in the earth, in the place indicated, enclosed in a rusty iron box, together with a parchment document, stating that they were placed there in 1786 by Count Cagliostro, in anticipation of a trick to be performed before Louis Philippe of Orleans in the next century. As if to verify this statement, it bore the seal of Cagliostro, which had been given to Robert-Houdin by Torrini.

The astonishment created by this trick was well sustained by the second-sight exhibition, which derived additional *éclat* from Emile Robert correctly describing a diamond pin, enclosed in a case, which the Duchess of Orleans placed in the conjuror's hands, but forbade him to open. Robert-Houdin contrived to obtain a glimpse of the pin, without being observed, and the astonishment of the royal party was unbounded.

During the autumn season Robert-Houdin introduced the trick of the inexhaustible bottle, and also the "suspension in equilibrium by atmospheric air, through the action of concentrated ether," as he pretended, which pretence so deceived the public that complaints were made in the journals that the health of the boy, Eugene Robert, was suffering from his being nightly subjected to the ethe-

real influence. Though the trick had been performed, in another form, centuries before by the conjurors of India, the public mind was so filled with the quackery of mesmerism, that they were prepared to believe the possibility of a person sleeping in the air, without other support than the upright rod on which Eugene's right elbow rested, rather than to suspect the existence of concealed mechanism.

The revolution which drove Louis Philippe from the throne preluded a bad time for public entertainers, not only in France, but over the greater part of the continent; and Robert-Houdin accepted an invitation from Mr. Mitchell to perform at the St. James's Theatre, on the sharing system, on the three nights weekly on which the theatre was not occupied by the French comic opera company, which, as well as Franconi's circus *troupe*, had also sought a refuge in London from the amusement-suspending operation of political commotions. The second sight and the ethereal suspension proved as attractive in London as in Paris, and the conjuror had the honour of performing before the Queen, the Prince Consort, and a crowd of the nobility at a *fête* given in the grounds of Sir Arthur Webster's mansion at Fulham for the benefit of a charity.

On the termination of his engagement in Lon-

don, Robert-Houdin visited Manchester, Liverpool, Brighton, Worcester, Cheltenham, Bristol, and Exeter, performing to crowded houses. Returning to London for a second series of performances at the St. James's Theatre, he received a summons to perform before the royal family at Buckingham Palace, where he evoked a *furore* of applause by turning the Queen's glove into a bouquet, which he placed in a vase, sprinkled with water, and again transformed into a garland, the flowers of which arranged themselves so as to form the name of Victoria.

Again leaving London for a professional tour in the eastern counties, he was induced to give a performance at Hertford, where, by one of those vagaries of public taste and opinion for which it is often difficult to find any reason, he had only five auditors. Before these he went through the whole of his programme, however, and on the conclusion of the entertainment invited them to the stage. His auditors, thinking they were to assist in another trick, complied with the invitation, and were then told to turn their faces towards the orchestra. In another moment the conjuror clapped his hands, and, on turning round, his auditors saw the centre table cleared of the conjuring apparatus, and spread with a capital supper, of which they were invited to

partake. An hour or two passed very pleasantly, and we may be sure that that supper with Robert-Houdin lingered long in the memories of those who partook of it.

Crowded houses at Cambridge compensated for this failure, nor was there any reason to complain of the attendances at Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich, and Colchester. "I have only three souvenirs of those five towns," he used to say; "the failure at Hertford, the enthusiastic reception from the students at Cambridge, and the nuts at Colchester." In explanation of the last reminiscence, the reader must be informed that it was the custom of the Colchesterians to fill their pockets with nuts when visiting any place of amusement, in order to find occupation for their jaws during the entertainment. Entertainers were apt to find the custom annoying, for so prevalent was it that the manager of the theatre informed Robert-Houdin that he had seen actors cracking nuts while engaged on the stage.

Returning to London, Robert-Houdin was preparing to start for France, when he received and accepted an offer from Mr. Knowles, the manager of the Manchester theatre, for a tour through Scotland and Ireland. This tour caused his return to Paris to be deferred until the autumn of 1849, after which he rested for some time on his laurels,

enjoying the repose which he had so well earned by his late exertions. Having made arrangements with a young Englishman named Hamilton, who was his pupil and friend, to give his entertainment in Paris, he devoted the following summer to a provincial tour, for the recruitment of his health, and in the beginning of 1852 commenced a tour through Germany.

After performing at Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Homburg, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Spa, he was engaged to perform in Berlin for six weeks, which, in consequence of the attractiveness of his performances, was prolonged to three months. In the following spring he was again engaged by Mr. Mitchell for a series of performances at the St. James's Theatre, and had the honour of performing, for the third time, before the Queen and the royal family, on the occasion of the birthday of the Princess Louisa.

At the termination of his engagement with Mr. Mitchell, he repeated his entertainment, for a limited number of nights, at Sadler's Wells, and afterwards at several of the provincial towns. Returning to his native country once more, he devoted his attention for some time to the mechanical studies which had always been his most favourite occupation, and in 1855 obtained a Paris exhibition

medal for new applications of electricity to mechanism.

In the following year he resumed his profession of conjuror, and visited Algiers, where, on account of the religious scruples of the native population, he substituted for the inexhaustible bottle a vase containing an apparently unlimited supply of confectionery, and also coffee. The most notable features of his Algerian programme, however, were his box trick, the gun delusion, and the vanishing Arab. In the first electricity was used, the spectators being invited to try their strength by endeavouring to lift a box from the stage, and a powerful Arab, who volunteered for the purpose, being, after many vain efforts, thrown upon his back.

In the exhibition of the gun trick, he substituted for his own person an apple on the point of a knife, afterwards dividing the apple, and extracting from it the marked bullet. The Arabs were much surprised by this trick, and still more when one of them was invited to the stage, and concealed under a wicker cone, and, on the cone being removed, was found to have vanished. With a cry of dismay, the greater part of them turned, and fled from the room, unable to persuade themselves that Eblis had not something to do with what they had seen; and when they met at the entrance the man whom they

had seen disappear so mysteriously a moment before, they could only open their eyes widely, and exclaim "*Mashallah!*"

He afterwards performed, in the interior, before an audience consisting almost entirely of Arabs, when, after he had elicited expressions of wonder and admiration by performing the gun trick, an old Arab, who perhaps had some suspicion of the true nature of the trick, said :—"The Frank is doubtless a powerful magician; but will he suffer me to fire at him with one of my own pistols?"

"Yes," replied Robert-Houdin, "but I must first invoke the powers that assist me."

He prepared for the test of the following day by fabricating a couple of bullets of wax and lamp-black, one of which he punctured as soon as the exterior had become firm, and allowed the still soft and warm composition in the interior to run out through the orifice. He then filled up the void with blood, and closed the opening with a morsel of the composition.

Thus prepared, he, on the following night, offered a saucerful of leaden bullets for the inspection of the sceptical Arab, who, after satisfying himself that they were really made of lead, handed his pistols to the conjuror. The experiment was a new one, and Robert-Houdin confessed afterwards that

he trembled as he dexterously contrived to slip one of his prepared bullets into the pistol, and, after ramming it down upon the powder with the ramrod, handed it back to the Arab.

"Now fire!" he exclaimed, folding his arms.

The Arab fired, and the conjuror, to the former's amazement, not only remained erect, but took from his mouth a leaden bullet, which the doubter was satisfied was one of those which he had examined.

"Bah!" exclaimed Robert-Houdin, as he loaded the other pistol. "You cannot use your own weapons. See here! You have been unable to draw blood from me; but I will draw blood from yonder wall."

He fired at the wall, upon which a stain of blood was immediately seen. The Arabs crowded to the wall, stared at the blood, and touched it with their fingers. Their amazement deepened into awe, and one and all acknowledged that the Frank was a more powerful magician than any of their own people.

On returning to France, Robert-Houdin commenced the composition of his memoirs, which were published in 1858, and an English translation of which, in two volumes, appeared in the following year. In the concluding paragraph, he promised the public another work, the subject of which was to

be legerdemain and its professors; but the work never appeared. In 1861, however, he published *Les Tricheries des Grecs Dévoilée*, an English version of which appeared two years later, under the title of *The Sharper Detected and Exposed*.

CHAPTER XV.

Optical Illusions—Robin's Ghosts and Phantom Fight—Automaton Calculator—Wiljalba Frikell—Wanderings in Three Quarters of the Globe—Conjuring without Apparatus—Orginski Rosenfeld—De Linski—Chinese Conjurors—Bosco—A Conjuror with a Dozen Languages—The Vanishing Card—Malcolm—Behind the Scenes with a Wizard—Inglis—Hambujer.

Optical illusions, which had for a long while been absent from the conjuror's repertory, made a considerable figure in the entertainment with which Robin presented the Parisians in 1847. I am unacquainted with the particular apparatus with which he worked, but the description of his apparitions and his phantom fight suggest something like the means used fifteen or sixteen years afterwards by Mr. Pepper at the Polytechnic. He came to London in 1857, and leased the house 232, Piccadilly, (afterwards the Myriographic Hall,) which he fitted

up as an elegant little place of amusement, under the name of the Salle de Robin. There, during two seasons, optical illusions were cleverly and successfully combined with legerdemain and the exhibition of an automaton calculator. The trick of the vanishing lady was performed with the aid of Madame Robin, who assisted her husband in his performance; and the marvellous results of the gipsy cookery—a trick which Robin claimed to have imported from Spain, and exhibited in London for the first time—evoked as much wonder as when they were shown by Döbler.

In 1852, however, Anderson, Jacobs, Buck, and Rosenfeld were performing in London, and, with Robin, constituted a larger amount of conjuring talent than the metropolis could furnish with paying audiences. At the close of his second season, therefore, Robin disposed of the lease and fittings of his elegant little saloon, and returned to Paris.

Wiljalba Frikell, who also made his first appearance in London in 1851, is the next claimant of our attention. He was born in 1818, at Scopio, a village in Finland, on the borders of Lapland. His parents being in good circumstances, he was well educated, completing his studies at the High School of Munich, which he did not leave until 1840, when in his twenty-second year. He practised legerde-

main while studying, as his parents hoped, for one of the learned professions, and read all the works on the subject that he could obtain; and, on the completion of his collegiate career, the love of travel, combined with his conjuring proclivities, induced him to set out on a tour through eastern and southern Europe as a professor of the Black Art.

He travelled through Germany, Hungary, Wallachia, and Turkey, and thence proceeded to Egypt, where he had the honour of performing before Mehemet Ali, who awarded him a gold medal for his proficiency in the magical art. Returning to Europe, he visited Greece, Italy, and Spain, and afterwards proceeded to India. In all the countries which he visited, he took care to see the performances of all the conjurors whom he found engaged in the exercise of their profession, and devoted much time to the study and practice of the means of dispensing with apparatus.

"The use of complicated and cumbrous apparatus," he observed in the preface to his *Lessons in Magic*, "to which modern conjurors have become addicted, not only greatly diminishes the amount of astonishment they are enabled to produce,—a defect which is not compensated by the external splendour and imposing effect of such paraphernalia,—but the useful lesson, how fallible our senses are, by means the

most ordinary and at everybody's command, is entirely lost. It has been my object in my performances to restore the art to its original province, and to extend that to a degree which it has, I believe, never yet hitherto reached. I banish all such mechanical and scientific preparatives from my own practice, confining myself for the most part to the objects and materials of every-day life. The success which I have met with emboldens me to believe that I have followed the right path."

On his return to Europe from the East, he travelled through Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and performed before the royal families of those countries. The Czar presented him with a valuable diamond ring, and the King of Denmark decorated him with the order of the Dannebrog. In 1851 he came to London, as already stated, and performed at the Hanover Square Rooms, and afterwards at the St. James's Theatre. The absence of apparatus was a novelty, though it is probable the greater part of his auditors would have been impressed in a greater degree by such a lavish display of glittering apparatus as had been made by Anderson and Jacobs. His broken German and a comical peculiarity of manner caused him to be described in *Punch* as "a comic Charles Mathews;" and, as he did not follow the examples of Döbler and Philippe in the

matter of costume, the critic of the same facetious publication compared him to "a monster raven in full dress for an evening party."

Frikell, like his predecessors in the art, had the honour of performing before the Queen and the royal family, during his stay in this country. He was succeeded in London by Anderson, Jacob, Buck, and Rosenfeld, the last of which quaternion alone has to be noticed in this chapter. Orginski Rosenfeld was a Polish conjuror, and performed in the spring of 1852 at Crosby Hall. His ability was not equal to his pretensions, for, though he claimed to have won "the admiration of millions of persons throughout the whole of the continent," and to have obtained the name of the modern Faustus, he performed only the old tricks which Ball and Blitz had exhibited a quarter of a century before, with the addition of second sight and the inexhaustible bottle.

In 1853, Mr. E. T. Smith, who was then lessee of Drury Lane, to fill up a gap before Easter, engaged De Linski, who was announced as the Great French Wizard, though his name is suggestive rather of a Polish origin. He came credited with the reputation of having presented his entertainment "in all the continental cities, and before all the Crowned Heads of Europe, with distinguished

success;" but his performances fell flat upon minds that had been surfeited with all the good things of the magician's repertory for several successive seasons by such masters of the profession as Anderson, Döbler, Philippe, Robert-Houdin, Robin, and Frikell.

At the same season of the following year, Mr. Smith engaged for twelve nights a *troupe* of Chinese conjurors, jugglers, and acrobats, who had achieved remarkable successes in their progress to meet the sun. They had enjoyed for several years the honour of being the chief performers at the Court of Pekin, but, being suspected of a leaning towards the Christian faith, and perhaps compromised in some degree with the party of progress in China, they found it necessary for their safety to leave the Flowery Land, and seek the smiles of fortune in other climes. They proceeded in the first instance to Hong Kong, where they performed upwards of two hundred consecutive nights. They then crossed the Pacific, and gave exhibitions of their skill at San Francisco, and the principal towns and gold-fields of California.

They afterwards crossed the American continent, and performed with great success at the Broadway theatre, New York. During their engagement in that city, their performances were witnessed by

Anderson, who estimated their skill so highly that he made arrangements with them for a series of exhibitions in England. They accompanied him to Liverpool, where the novelty of their performances, and the sensational character of the knife-throwing feat (afterwards performed at some of the music-halls by the Brothers Nemo) drew crowded houses.

At Drury Lane they were introduced in an entertainment called *The Feast of the Dragon*, and were supposed to exhibit before the Emperor and the Imperial Court of Pekin. They numbered eight performers, including women and boys, and their feats were of a varied character, embracing tumbling, juggling, balancing, fire-eating, besides conjuring, a specimen of a Chinese concert in the shape of a quartet for a gong, cymbals, and a couple of stringed instruments, which was more curious than agreeable, and an attempt at a Chinese ballet, which provoked more laughter than admiration. The juggling was excellent, but the conjuring portion of the entertainment presented nothing remarkable, the feat of producing from beneath a table-cloth a basin filled to the brim with water, there being no visible or conceivable means of its conveyance from any source, having been anticipated by Philippe.

Tuck Quy and party were succeeded by Bosco, a

native of Lombardy, where he was born in 1823. Like Frikell, he received a liberal education, and studied medicine, in which he obtained a diploma; but his professional prospects being injured by his participation in the revolutionary movement against the Austrian domination in 1848, he was led by the success of his performances as an amateur conjuror to make legerdemain his profession. Travelling through Piedmont and Switzerland, and afterwards visiting the principal towns of Germany, he at length reached Berlin, where he had the honour of performing before the King of Prussia and the royal family.

From Berlin he ventured to proceed to Vienna, where also, his antecedents being forgotten or unknown, he performed before the Imperial Court. Another tour of Germany brought him in 1854 to the Rhine again, and he travelled westward until Paris was reached, and he was invited to exhibit his skill before the Emperor, who presented him with the cross of the Legion of Honour.

Bosco had as remarkable an aptitude for languages as for legerdemain, and was a most accomplished linguist, having acquired French, Spanish, German, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Servian, Wallachian, and Turkish, in addition to Italian and Latin. Most conjurors are content to address

a foreign audience in their own language, and I once heard an Indian professor of the art discourse fluently in Hindustanee while performing a trick before an English audience. Döbler could speak only German, and the broken English of Frikell was little more intelligible. Robert-Houdin could speak only French, and when an auditor in the pit, while he was performing at Manchester, desired him to speak English, his attempts to render himself intelligible in that language proved almost as amusing as his tricks.

Bosco determined to learn English before he presented himself before an English audience, and with that view resided two months at Falmouth, employing his time as a dancing-master while studying the language, and thus "killing two birds with one stone." He made his first appearance in this country as a conjuror at Falmouth, and after performing in several other towns in the western counties, came to London. Magic had had a long run of popular favour by this time, however, and more novel and sensational feats were required to stimulate sight-seers than the new professor could present. He afterwards made another provincial tour, which he extended northward to Aberdeen. The royal family was at that time at Balmoral, where Prince Frederick William of Prussia was a

guest, and through him Bosco obtained an invitation to exhibit his skill before the Court.

Bosco was fond of performing conjuring tricks with the semi-publicity of a tavern-bar or a railway-carriage, as well as in private apartments, when in the society of friends. Among those with whom he became acquainted while in London was the vocalist known as the Black Malibran, at whose apartments, near the Princess's Theatre, he once produced a common wooden picture frame, containing a glass, covered at the back with brown paper. Having requested the lady to examine it, and to draw a card, retaining the frame in her hands, he threw a handkerchief over it, pronounced a cabalistic formula, made a pass over it, and then, taking the frame into his own hands, waved it in the air, and removed the handkerchief. The card drawn by the lady then appeared in the centre of the frame, but a repetition of the magic ceremonies caused it to vanish. The secret of the trick was that there were two glasses, and that the frame was hollow at the top and bottom, forming receptacles for sand of the same colour as the paper at the back. The card was forced, and its duplicate already affixed to the inner glass, appearing and disappearing as the waving of the frame caused the sand to fall into the lower receptacle, or to spread over the card.

Bosco was the last of the great conjurors by whom the public had been amused for twenty years. The superior style of the entertainments which they presented, and the succession of startling feats which compelled the wonder and admiration of those who witnessed them, made them a popular means of amusement during that period; but sight-seers began at length to regard the bills of a new conjuror with comparative indifference, and to to ask, with Solomon, "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new?"

There was no response. Anderson carried his tricks to other lands, and Döbler, and Philippe, and Hermann, and Robert-Houdin, and Robin, and Frikell, and Bosco did not repeat their visits to our shores. The minor performers who perambulated the provinces were puzzled to produce an entertainment that would attract remunerative audiences. Malcolm, who performed at several places in the suburbs of the metropolis in 1857, and had previously made the tour of the provinces, and had the honour of performing before the royal family, claimed to be "the first and only one who, with a thorough knowledge of the art of magic, conceived the idea of admitting the public, as it were, 'behind the scenes,' and who, after accomplishing the experimental deceptions, explains to the audience the

secret machinery, or manipulation, by which they are effected." But even this, in spite of the claim put forth, was not a new idea, as has been shown in a previous chapter.

Hambujer, a Danish professor of the magic art, performed, like Frikell, without apparatus, and, like Philippe, with bare arms. He also disclaimed confederacy, and consequently exhibited only the tricks which do not require the aid of confederates for their success. He never performed in London, I believe, but a manuscript note on the margin of a book in the library of the British Museum credits him with considerable skill. He performed in 1859 at the Rotunda, Dublin, where also, in the same year, Inglis appeared, combining conjuring with a ventriloquial entertainment.

CHAPTER XVI.

Wellington Young—Professor Logrenia—The Table-Rappers and Clairvoyants—Louisa Miller—Professor Sinclair—The Blooming Orange Tree—Optical Illusions at the Polytechnic—Silvester's Ghost—The Ghost at the Music-halls—Revival of Mediæval Magic—The Skeleton in the Cabinet—The Vanishing Man and the Speaking Head—Alfred Stodare—The Sphinx—The Mysterious Hand—The Shade of Socrates—Another Automaton Chess-player.

During the last ten years of the time when Anderson and his foreign rivals had possession of the London theatres temporarily given up to the professors of magic, two or three native conjurors gave very good entertainments at the minor places of amusement in the suburbs of the metropolis and the provincial towns. Foremost among these illusionists was Mr. Wellington Young, who in 1846 had the honour of performing before the Queen and the Prince Consort, and the family and friends of

the Duke of Norfolk, at Arundel Castle. His name was met with, from time to time, in the columns of provincial journals, during several following years, when he engaged the town-hall or assembly-room of a south of England market-town for his entertainment; but, as the critics of the country newspapers invariably pronounce every conjuror who visits their town the extinguisher of his predecessors, and the equal, if not the superior, of Anderson and Robert-Houdin, the quotation of their eulogia would not help us in the smallest degree to a judgment of Mr. Wellington Young's merits.

During the winter and early spring months, he performed, as most of the minor members of the profession do, chiefly before schools and private parties. Conjurors are addicted to the use of stilted and extravagant language in their announcements, and not at all deficient in self-appreciation of their merits; and Wellington Young was not an exception to the general rule. Without detracting in the slightest degree from his merits as a conjuror, which I believe were rather above than below the average, it may be observed that, at the time when Robin and Frikell were performing in the metropolis, and Robert-Houdin and Anderson were not yet forgotten, there was at least no excess of modesty in the

claim of Mr. Wellington Young to be "the acknowledged first professor of natural magic of the day;" while we can only smile at his invitation to the nobility and gentry to witness his entertainment at a school-room in the vicinity of the Elephant and Castle.

His practice seems to have been to make no charge for admission at the doors on such occasions, but to issue free transferable tickets, accompanied by programmes of the entertainment, to as many residents of the neighbourhood as the room would accommodate. "The talent displayed in this entertainment," he explained, "being calculated only for a select audience, no one can be admitted but those who receive this invitation, with the annexed ticket, the distribution of which is extremely limited. The proprietors of shops (those who are invited) are requested not on any account to allow this circular to be placed in their windows, which would give more publicity than required, the object being to secure one class of audience, that it may approximate to a private party. And as the principal families only are invited, it is necessary that this ticket be presented at the door, which is the only means of securing a genteel party, to which end every precaution is taken. Each ticket will admit any number in one party the bearer may introduce. No

charge for admission, but a collection in silver will be made during the evening, to which each person is expected to contribute, in order that those parties who honour Mr. Young with their presence may judge for themselves before they are called upon to subscribe to his efforts."

Another of these announcements states that "in no part of the room will less than sixpence be received." The entertainment was really a good one, and included the inexhaustible bottle and the suspension in air. On the retirement of Robin, his elegant saloon in Piccadilly was engaged for a limited number of nights by Wellington Young, who afterwards performed for some time at the Marionette theatre, formerly the Adelaide Gallery. One of the London critics pronounced him "a worthy successor to the Houdins, Döblers, and Philippes;" and the *Athenæum* noticed his performances in the following terms:—

"While the Rappites are blundering over their spirit-manifestations, and getting up conversations between the seen and the unseen world by the clumsy contrivance of knocking on a table, or on the floor, — why should not the spirits who have knuckles or toes have tongues as organs of articulation? — there is at the Salle Robin, in Piccadilly, an exhibition of 'Magique Physique and Legerde-

main,' in which, while no pretence is made to the supernatural, things are done which we challenge the rappers, and eke Lieut. Morrison, to perform or to expound. Can the American jugglers bring down a spirit in the shape of a real live Guinea pig, as Mr. Wellington Young does? — make an old hat yield a whole treasury of toys? — put cards into Lieut. Morrison's pocket against his will, and read them there? — or play with edged tools, and not hurt their rappers after the surprising fashion of the Indian Oak-ka? Can they bring our defunct grandmother to us in the form of an old umbrella, or take her out of a bottle? — which it is quite clear to us that Mr. Wellington Young could if he tried. If not, we recommend our readers to prefer the conjuring at the Salle Robin, where a host of impossible things are done by possible means,— where the power of that 'tricksy spirit,' Mr. Young, to tell the character of the card that we have secretly drawn is proclaimed aloud in the plain, unambiguous vernacular, not insinuated by the prevarication of a shuffle with the toes."

At the Salle Robin and the Marionette theatre, Mr. Young did not depend upon a silver collection, but made a regular charge for admission, ranging from sixpence to two shillings. In the spring of 1854, he performed for several nights at the Victoria,

then under the direction of Miss Vincent, afterwards Mrs. Crowther.

Another very creditable entertainer of the same class was Professor Logrenia, who was several times engaged, at holiday seasons, to give his entertainment at the Polytechnic. Combining his conjuring sometimes with minstrelsy of the burnt cork character, and sometimes with dissolving views, he was a popular entertainer more than twenty years, and down to the present time, for his name still figures, with those of Mr. Wellington Young, and Professors Sinclair, Devono, Beaumont, Burmain, and De Vere, in the list of conjurors now entertaining the public. He assumed the title of Emperor of the Necromancers and Great Demonstrator of Ancient and Modern Magic, and in 1854 performed for several nights at Sadler's Wells, on which occasion he was pronounced by the *Era*, "decidedly an accomplished *artiste* in the science of mystery, something really above the ordinary grade of mystic professors."

His repertory included the gold-fish trick, the conversion of ink into water, the prolific hat, and the mysterious production of hot coffee, *à la Soyer*, which, with amusing illustrations of the spirit-rapping imposture, brought his entertainment fully up to the level of the time. Some of his *soirées*

mystérieuses, about twenty years ago, were given in conjunction with Miller, the veteran showman and conjuror, whose daughter, Louisa, gave an exhibition of the mystery of *clairvoyance* as puzzling as it was amusing.

Professor Sinclair was less remarkable as a conjuror than as a ventriloquist and a performer on what he called the aerial flutina, "an instrument which, in his hands, reminds his auditors of the enchanting music of fairyland," we are told, though it is not easy to conceive, how his auditors could be reminded by his flutina performances of what they had not heard. This statement is thrown into the shade, however, by the Hibernian announcement, that "Tom Thumb," the American dwarf, who assisted at some of Sinclair's *soirées fantastiques*, "after an absence of ten years from England, is now making the tour of France, Spain, Germany, and Russia, and will hold his levée, positively for the above days only."

Besides playing several airs, he produced on the aerial flutina imitations of the bells, trumpet, and organ; and this portion of the entertainment was extended in 1855 by the performances of Herr Sangermann and Signor Ricardo, of the organophonic band, which had previously performed at the St. James's theatre. Sinclair's conjuring was

of the ordinary school-treat character, his most remarkable feat being a more advanced development of the flower trick in the production of an orange-tree, which expanded its leaves and produced blossoms, which were succeeded by ripe fruit, equal in beauty and flavour to the golden globelets of the Azores.

There was a dead calm in the world of magic for several years after the departure of Anderson for other lands. The resources of legerdemain were for the time exhausted, and the entertainers of the public were compelled to have recourse to physical phenomena for hints for the production of wonders novel and startling enough to be widely attractive. The dim records of ancient and mediæval magic were explored for illusions such as made famous the names of Bacon and Bungay, Agrippa and Faust; and the result, after a few years, was the supersession of inexhaustible bottles and prolific hats by phantoms that seemed as tangible as they were distinctly visible, speaking heads unattached to bodies, and mysterious hands that wrote words upon paper without being connected with arms.

The invention of the ghost illusion has been claimed by more than one person, and it is probable that more than one inventive mind was occupied

with the idea at the same time. The germ of it may have been found in the phantoms evoked by Robin, or it may have been suggested by observation of constantly occurring phenomena by one sufficiently acquainted with optical apparatus to turn the idea to good account. Be this as it may, Mr. Silvester claims to be the inventor of the original ghost illusion, first produced at the Polytechnic, and commonly called Pepper's ghost, from the popular scientific lecturer who so long directed that institution; while Messrs. Poole and Young and Mr. Gompertz claim respectively for their phantascope and spectroscope an independent origin, and a character the originality of which is not affected by the previous production of a similar illusion at the Polytechnic.

The effects introduced in the various entertainments combining dissolving views and vocal illustrations with a recital of some popular story, for which the Polytechnic has so long been famous, exceeded anything of the kind ever shown before; and juveniles, and even children of a larger growth, have rubbed their eyes in wonder, and asked themselves whether they were awake or dreaming, when they saw the figure of the unfortunate Amy Robsart advance along the corridor, and fall through the trap-door, or the roc drop the boulder on the raft

of Sinbad. In those illusions, however, the spectators knew that they were looking at a picture, magnified by a powerful oxy-hydrogen microscope, and thrown upon a white curtain; and they were puzzled only by the movement imparted to the figures. But the ghosts were a puzzle from beginning to end.

The wondering spectators saw figures appear and disappear, not gradually, as in the dissolving views, but instantaneously, upon a stage arranged as for a drama; and other figures pass through these, though apparently not less real, as if they were as unsubstantial as vapour. And the apparitions not only moved about the stage, looking as tangible as the actors who passed through them, and from whose proffered embrace or threatened attack they vanished in an instant, but spoke or sang with voices of unmistakable reality.

The illusion proved too great an attraction to be long confined to the Polytechnic. By arrangement with Mr. Pepper, who purchased the patent rights of Mr. Silvester, it was produced at several of the metropolitan music-halls, while others produced it with the apparatus of Messrs. Poole and Young, or of Mr. Gompertz. The most successful of the ghost entertainments were produced at the London Pavilion and the Canterbury, and of these

two the palm should, I think, be awarded to the former. It represented a dream after a visit to the opera, in which the *prima donna*, the principal *danseuse* of the ballet, and a flower-girl appear successively to the dreamer, who, on attempting to snatch a kiss from the fair vendor of camellias, is disappointed by her immediate vanishing. Of these four characters, the gentleman alone was on the stage, the others being "ghosts,"—otherwise, reflections of Miss D'Auban in the various assumptions, for which her vocal and Terpsichorean talents eminently qualified her. The Canterbury entertainment was a fairy spectacle, the most striking feature of which was a combat between a wandering prince and an ogre, only the representative of the former being on the stage.

These extraordinary effects depend upon the optical law, that when a ray of light is reflected on a plane surface, the reflection takes place in a plane perpendicular to the reflecting surface, and the incidental and reflected rays make equal angles with this surface. If we look at an ordinary mirror, we perceive that objects are reproduced apparently at the same distance behind the glass as they are before it. In the ghost illusion, unsilvered plate-glass is used, which may seem quite a different thing; but if, when travelling by railway, we look

at the glass sash of the carriage while passing through a tunnel, we see ourselves and our fellow-travellers reproduced as distinctly as in a mirror, and, as in that case, at exactly the same distance beyond the glass as we are in front of it.

This is a simple illustration of what was a startling mystery when "Pepper's ghost" first astonished London. In the production of this illusion in a theatre or music-hall, the figure to be reproduced is placed below the level of the stage, and strongly illuminated by the oxy-hydrogen or other powerful light. A large sheet of plate-glass is placed on the front of the stage, at an angle regulated by the distance between the figure below and the spectator, so that the reflected image shall appear to the audience to be behind the glass, at a distance which will permit an actor on the stage to apparently walk through the phantom, pierce it with a sword, etc. As the actor cannot see the ghosts, these movements require very nice management. The floor of the stage is marked for certain positions, and the mechanical arrangements must allow the person who represents the ghost to see the actors on the stage, and also his own reflection. The auditorium is darkened, and the glass cannot, if properly arranged, be detected by the spectators.

In the progress of this invention, Mr. Silvester conducted his experiments in a garden, situate in one of the southern suburbs of the metropolis, where they produced some unintended and inconvenient effects. Some of the neighbours saw strange figures appear and disappear in a manner of which they knew no example, except in ghost stories; and from gazing and shuddering they soon proceeded to whispering and shaking their heads. Vague rumours of awful mysteries to be witnessed in Mr. Silvester's garden were wafted about the neighbourhood. The infection spread, and crowds began to assemble in the road, and the heads of the more daring to dot the wall of the garden to watch for the appearance of the fearsome things that walked there. The intervention of the police soon became necessary, and Mr. Silvester found it advisable to raise his ghosts under conditions involving no alarm to the nerves of persons susceptible of the promptings of superstition.

The ghost illusion was followed at some of the metropolitan music-halls by an entertainment equally puzzling, and the inventors of which did not disclose their names. The names even of the actors in it did not appear in the programmes. These were three in number, the characters represented being a German officer, his servant, and a comrade

of the latter. The officer goes out to attend a ball, first giving directions to his servant to brush his clothes, empty a hamper of wine, and clean his pistols. Karl opens a wardrobe to take out his master's clothes, and finds it occupied by a human skeleton! He closes the doors in affright, and when he again ventures to open them the skeleton has disappeared. Having brushed the clothes, he proceeds to execute his second task; but, being unable to resist the temptation to drink some of the wine, becomes intoxicated.

In this condition he receives a visit from a comrade, with whom he quarrels, and, angry words being succeeded by blows, he runs off to procure a sword, determined to annihilate his adversary on the spot. The latter takes refuge in the empty hamper, and the next moment Karl rushes on, sword in hand, to find that his enemy has disappeared. After vainly searching the apartment, he thinks of the hamper, which he probes relentlessly with the sword. Having glutted his rage, he raises the lid of the hamper; it is vacant—the man has vanished! In the midst of his wonder at this mysterious disappearance, his comrade appears in the gallery, from which he leaps to the stage. Joy at finding that he has not committed a murder takes the place of rage in Karl's breast, and they become friends again.

Karl then produces the pistol case, but starts with horror when, on opening it, he finds that it contains, not the weapons, but his master's head! The lips move, and a hollow voice informs him that his master has quarrelled at the ball with a rival, and in a hostile encounter has been slain. Before the horror-stricken man has recovered from his fright, his master returns, alive and well, and informs him that he has contrived all that has occurred in order to frighten him, and thus cure him of his addiction to the bottle. In real life, the disclosure would be likely to neutralise the influence of the trick; but Karl vows that he will never drink to excess again, and the horrors and mysteries of the night are brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

These entertainments had imparted to the public mind a new zest for conjuring performances of the mysterious and semi-scientific order when a new magician appeared at the Egyptian Hall, which has since that period become as famous for conjuring entertainments as it was formerly for panoramas, and subsequently for monstrosities. Mr. Alfred Stodare, the new aspirant for public favour, was a well-educated Frenchman, and produced a programme well spiced with sensational, and therefore highly attractive, feats. Among them was the

Indian basket trick, performed with a young lady, who entered a large basket, into which the conjuror thrust a sword, and from which, on its being opened, she was found to have vanished, to reappear among the spectators. He also performed the trick of the instantaneous growth of flowers.

Stodare's greatest marvel, however was the mysterious Sphinx. Upon what appeared to be an ordinary three-legged table, standing in the centre of the stage, a head stood, reminding the spectator of the famous brazen head ascribed to Roger Bacon. The spectator, seeing only a head, and feeling satisfied that there was an open space between the table and the stage, was amazed when the eyes and lips moved, and the tongue spoke. The secret was in the legs of the table, which were connected by two mirrors, extending from the back legs, and meeting at the front leg. If a spectator is ignorant of the existence of a mirror, he has no means of distinguishing reflected objects from real ones, unless they appear in unnatural positions. It is obvious, therefore, that, by a proper arrangement of duplicate pictures of the part of the stage or scene hidden by the table, a reflection of those duplicates may be made to appear in the mirrors beneath the table, and thus lead the spectator to imagine that he sees beyond the table

whereas he sees only a reflected image of the back part of the stage or scene. The triangular space enclosed by the mirrors contained the body and limbs pertaining to the head on the table.

The speaking head at the Egyptian Hall was followed, in 1868, by the mysterious hand at the Polytechnic, which, unconnected with an arm or body, wrote given words upon paper. The Spiritualsts have shown their dupes so-called spirit-hands and spirit-writing, but modern conjurors very properly and fairly disclaim all pretensions to supernatural aid, and, if they do not acquaint us with the precise *modus operandi*, they exhibit their marvels simply as exemplifications of the arcana of physical science and mechanical ingenuity. The inventor of the mysterious hand claimed for it nothing more than was claimed for the sphinx of the Egyptian Hall.

The agency by which the hand was made to write has been conjectured to have been electrical; but the secret has not been divulged, and the *modus operandi* can be conjectured only from the nature of the phenomenon. The hand reposed on the centre of a table, looking like one of Dr. Kahn's wax models. On a word being given by a spectator, the exhibitor placed a slip of paper under the pen held by the waxen fingers, and pronounced

the word rather loudly. The pen then began to move, and the word was written in a somewhat cramped hand. Sometimes it was illegible—sometimes wrongly spelled. Sometimes the exhibitor tore up the paper without showing it, and repeated the word more loudly than before. The exhibition was strongly suggestive of a concealed operator.

Since the original "ghost" made its successful *débût*, under the auspices of Mr. Pepper, several similar optical illusions, all produced by new applications of the same scientific laws, have been exhibited at the Polytechnic. One of the most remarkable illustrated a lecture on the discoveries of Sir David Brewster, on the conclusion of which the curtain rose on the interior of an antique dwelling, in which a Greek invoked the shade of Socrates. The head of the philosopher appeared floating in the air, without a body, or any other visible means of support; and, in answer to a question propounded by the Greek, delivered a rhymed speech of about a dozen lines, with a mobility of feature which left no doubt of its animation. While the "ghosts" puzzled the world by rendering an absent person visible, the new illusion amazed the spectator by rendering invisible a portion of a person of whose bodily presence there could be no doubt. On the disappearance of Socrates, Sir

Joshua Reynolds's famous group of cherubs was exhibited, and the chubby faces united in singing a chorus.

In 1870 another automaton chess-player, or what was professed to be automatic, was exhibited at the Crystal Palace. It was a close imitation of Kempelen's famous mechanism, and like the Hungarian baron's, the figure was that of a fierce-looking Turk, life-size, and attired in a rich Oriental costume. Hajeeb, as he was called, sat cross-legged upon a chest, which ran upon casters, so as to be easily moved over the floor, to showthat there was no communication from below. There were doors in the chest, and also in the back and breast of the figure, which were opened to enable visitors to see the interior; but no candle was introduced, as mentioned in the accounts of the exhibition of Kempelen's figure. The inspection revealed nothing but a complex arrangement of cords, wheels, and pulleys.

Before commencing a game, the doors were all closed and locked, and the machinery wound up with a key such as is used for winding a large clock. The sound produced by the operation was similar to that which accompanies the winding of horological mechanism. Then a cushion was placed under the right arm of the figure, the chessmen were

set by the attendant, and the game began. The first move was always made by the Turk, and he invariably made choice of the white men, its play corresponding in both particulars with that of Kempelen's figure. The chess-board was raised a little above the level of the chest by a circular pedestal of wood, ostensibly for the purpose of enabling Hajeeb to reach more easily the farther side of the board; but the figure had the power of bending forward from the hips, during which motion, and also that of the arm, the sound of hinges or joints could be heard.

When he took a man, the Turk dropped it into the attendant's hand and placed its own on the vacant square. On giving check, it bent its head; on giving checkmate, it placed the fore-finger on the mated king, and nodded three times; when mate was given or announced by its opponent, it signified its abandonment of the game by removing its king, and placing it in a horizontal position at the side of the board. If his opponent made a wrong move, he shook his head and replaced the piece; if this occurred a second time, he removed the piece, and availed of the laws of the game to move; and on a third wrong move he swept the board with his arm, and ended the game. On the conclusion of a game, the figure, like Kempe-

len's, moved a knight over all the sixty-four squares of the board without touching any square twice, the attendant placing a white counter upon each square as it was touched, and the feat being performed in the short space of one minute.

This was the closing marvel of the last decade.

CHAPTER XVII.

Signor Rubini—The Indian Basket Trick—Beheading a Lady—The Fakeer of Oolu—A Lady Floating in Air—Professor Beaumont—Doings of the Spiritualists—Miss Katie King—Her Confession of Imposture—Mr. Maskelyne—His Exposure of the Brothers Davenport—Anti-spiritualistic *Séances* at the Egyptian Hall—The Automaton Whist-Player—Dr. Lynn—The Corded Box Trick—Palingenesia—Professor De Vere.

Colonel Stodare was succeeded at the Egyptian Hall by Signor Rubini, who, besides being a tolerably neat performer of the ordinary conjuring deceptions of the present day, also performed the Indian basket trick, and revived the old decapitation feat. These startling illusions were exhibited by the new aspirant to public favour, however, in a manner which entirely deprived them of the element of sensationalism. A young lady stepped into a large wicker basket, and the conjuror closed the lid. He then took a sword, and, with as much

nonchalance as coolness, thrust it into the basket twice. The lady had probably already left the basket; but, however this may have been, she gave no sign of her presence. The lid was then raised, and she was found to have disappeared.

The decapitation trick was performed with the same entire absence of an endeavour to give an air of reality to the operation, as was done by the old performers of the illusion, and by the Indian exhibitors of the basket trick. The young lady seated herself, very composedly, in a large easy-chair, and leaned against the cushioned back with no other manifestation of emotion than she would have displayed if about to have her hair dressed. Rubini, hovering about the chair more like a hair-dresser than an executioner, covered the young lady's head with a shawl, to spare, as he explained, the feelings of the spectators; and then went through the semblance of separating the head from the body. The shawl was removed, and what appeared to be a headless trunk remained on the chair. But the young lady had disappeared, for she showed herself a moment afterwards, with her head on her shoulders, though her headless double still occupied the chair.

The disappearance of the living lady from the chair was very cleverly contrived, and constituted

the best feature of the trick; but this might have been introduced in another deception, not involving any shock to the nerves of the more sensitively organised of the spectators, the sparing of which is the only reason that can be pleaded for performing feats of this description in a manner which is neither sensational nor burlesque. There are some persons who would rather not witness the performance of the decapitation and the basket trick, and probably a larger number who would feel a sensation of horror if they saw the former performed as it was by conjurors of the Elizabethan period, or the latter as travellers have seen it performed in India. But, if we regard the subject from this point of view, the question may be asked, Why perform such tricks at all? If the conjuror's aim is only to raise a laugh, why does he not crack a joke, and let the trick alone? There is, however, another course. If he fears to harrow the feelings of his audience, he can do the business in a burlesque manner. But it would be better to omit the trick than to pretend to cut off a woman's head as coolly as he would carve a fowl.

After Rubini, we had, at the Oxford Music-hall, "the Fakeer of Oolu," in whom the knowing ones recognised Mr. Silvester, who is much less like a fakeer than the juggler known as Dugwar is like a veritable Asiatic. The principal feature of Mr.

Silvester's entertainment was the revival of the aerial suspension trick, which he considerably improved and elaborated. The Indian performers of this trick exhibited themselves sitting, cross-legged, in the air, with no other visible support than the branch rod upon which one hand rested. Robert-Houdin developed it into an apparent sleeping in the air, with one hand supporting the head, and the elbow of the same arm resting on the top of an upright rod. Mr. Silvester contrived, by an improvement of the mechanism employed, to exhibit the young lady who acted as his medium "floating in the air," as the announcements expressed it; to speak more correctly, revolving, while in a recumbent posture, around the rod which furnished the means of support.

Professor Beaumont afterwards exhibited this trick at the Surrey Gardens, then under the management of Mr. Strange. The people who never learn, who repeat, parrot-like, the wisdom of their grandmothers, and retain all their lives a happy confidence in the infallibility of the *vox populi*, raised their voices against these exhibitions, as they did in Paris when the trick was originally exemplified by Eugene Robert-Houdin. To the credit of the London press it must be said that it did not join in the cry, as the Parisian

journals did; but perhaps something must be allowed, in this age of rapid enlightenment, for the quarter of a century which had elapsed since the wonder-loving Parisians were mystified by Robert-Houdin.

"What a shame!" was often murmured at the Oxford, and at the Surrey Gardens. "That poor young woman is being slowly murdered, as surely as if a daily dose of poison was infused into her food. When she leaves here, she will be like a dead thing. Every time she exhibits is a day taken from her life—another nail knocked into her coffin! It is a shame that such things are allowed to be done."

Some amount of mischief may have been done by Mesmerists, and a great deal has undoubtedly been wrought by so-called Spiritualists; but a broad and readily recognised line separates the conjuror from the quack. The former honestly avows that he is going to take advantage of the fallibility of our senses to perform a seeming impossibility by means which we cannot detect, but which he acknowledges to be derived from the natural laws by which the universe is governed. The latter pretends to be the medium of a supernatural power, and attempts, not merely to illude the senses, but to impose upon the understanding.

It is one of the most curious features of the

extraordinary delusion which, during the last thirty years, has taken possession of so many minds, that it has found votaries chiefly amongst the more highly educated classes. That the scheming knaves who direct the imposture, the wire-pullers of Spiritualism, should as a matter of preference, mark for their dupes those whose purses are well-filled is not surprising; but that the best-educated sections of society should furnish the largest proportion of dupes is a fact which cannot be accounted for by the preference of the "mediums" for such subjects, and which may well suggest a doubt as to the potency of education in the development of the intellect.

Whenever the Spiritualists have ventured to exhibit their mysteries before the public, they have invariably been detected, exposed, and ignominiously driven from the field. The discomfiture of the notorious Brothers Davenport will be remembered by many of my readers; but it may not be so generally known that the gentleman by whom it was given was Mr. Maskelyne, the clever conjuror now performing at the Egyptian Hall. During the provincial tour made by the Davenports on the termination of their London season at the Hanover Square Rooms, they gave a morning *séance* at the Town-hall, Cheltenham, on which occasion Mr. Maskelyne acted as one of the committee appointed

by the audience for the independent investigation of the phenomena presented. In the semi-darkness which the Spiritualists find necessary for their manifestations, spirit-hands were seen, bells were rung by invisible means, tambourines flung out of the cabinet in which the Davenports were supposed to be securely bound, and an air of Lover's was played very indifferently upon a violin and a guitar.

The doors of the cabinet were then opened, and the Davenports were seen, with their hands and feet bound, as when they were closed. Again they were shut up, and the various noises were repeated; but, in the midst of the wonder evoked by them, a piece of drugget which had been used to exclude the light fell from one of the windows, and Mr. Maskelyne was thus enabled to see Mr. Ira Davenport eject the instruments, and immediately re-secure himself with the ropes. As the representative of the audience, Mr. Maskelyne, in the discharge of his duty, announced what he had seen, and some disturbance ensued. A doctor of divinity, who was also on the platform, declared that he had seen nothing of the kind, and considerable controversy ensued; but the evidence of one credible person who has witnessed any occurrence is worth that of a dozen who have not seen it, and whose testimony can prove nothing.

More recent attempts to impose upon the public have resulted in similar exposures and defeats, the efforts of Anderson towards which have been ably seconded during the last two years by Dr. Lynn and Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke. Nothing has ever been done at Spiritualistic *séances*, even when held in the obscurity and privacy of a believer's drawing-room, with the gas lowered, other than is done by those gentlemen, who ridicule the idea of spiritual intervention in conjuring tricks, and honestly declare themselves to be no more than entertainers of the public with legerdemain and natural magic. The latest device of the Spiritualists was the claiming of the Egyptian Hall conjurors as "mediums," but the conjurors repudiate the connection.

It is perhaps too much to expect that the "mediums" will follow the example of Miss Katie King, and confess their misdoings, so long as dupes with heavy accounts at their bankers can be found. Outsiders who have occasionally dropped in at private *séances* with the spirits may have seen a certain charming and mysterious "fair one with golden locks" who so often appeared at Spiritualistic gatherings, when the gas had been lowered, and delighted them with her agreeable manners and conversation. Though believed by the dupes to be a spirit, she was acknowledged to be tangible; for

she allowed her friends to grasp her hand, and ladies to embrace her, though she pulled the whisker of a gentleman who wished to obtain like evidence of her substantiality. That young lady was then known as Miss Katie King, which was supposed to be the name she had borne while in the flesh.

After a season the idolised fair one was missed from her accustomed haunts, but appeared in Philadelphia in just as much time as would have sufficed for a voyage across the Atlantic. It is a fact, however, that the name of Miss Katie King does not appear in the passenger lists of any of the steamers. In the City of Brotherly Love, where she soon had as many admirers as in London, she kissed the bald head of Mr. Robert Dale Owen, and gave him a lock of her golden hair. The Illinois senator, who has adopted the mummeries into which his father, the philanthropist of New Lanark and Harmony Hall, subsided in his declining years, has given an account of his interviews with Katie which is a good example of the many similar exhibitions of the last dozen years.

He saw Katie on one occasion gradually disappear, the head fading first, then the body, last the feet. On another occasion she appeared only eighteen inches high, but in a few seconds raised herself to her full height. Once she floated in the air, as

Mr. Home used to do. Many more marvels were exhibited, one of which was thought conclusive of her spiritual character. Katie said that an English friend wanted to write. Mr. Owen marked a sheet of paper, which was handed into the cabinet from which Katie was wont to emerge. In a few minutes it appeared suspended in the air, while a small white hand, which was attached to no arm, wrote upon it. The paper was passed out, and was found to contain a message from the late Frederick Robertson, of Brighton. Next day it was compared with the handwriting and signature of that eminent preacher at the Franklin Library, and found to be exactly similar.

Miss Katie King has since confessed that she is no spirit, but a widow with two children, and that her name is White. She played her part for gain; was concealed in the cabinet, and glided from it when the gas was turned down. She was made to fade away by having several black crape veils thrown over her, one after another, as the appearance of fog or mist is produced in theatres by lowering curtains of blue gauze. The handwriting of Frederick Robertson was obtained from the Franklin Library the day before; the paper handed in by Mr. Owen was quickly changed for another, on which his mark was in-

stantly copied; and Katie seemed to trace letters on what was a message already written.

John Nevil Maskelyne, the unmasker of the Davenports, is a descendant of Nevil Maskelyne, the astronomer, and is a native of Cheltenham. Like Anderson and Robert-Houdin, he manifested a remarkable aptitude for mechanical invention at a very early age, and, as he grew older, showed a decided taste for intricate mechanism. At the age of thirteen, he was apprenticed to a watchmaker and jeweller in his native town, and soon became an adept at his business. When he had devoted three years to its acquisition, he was able to execute the most difficult works with masterly skill. He made few acquaintances, and passed little of his time in their society, employing most of his leisure in the construction of mechanical apparatus, devising optical illusions, and inventing conjuring tricks.

Before he was seventeen, he often entertained a party of friends for an hour or two with conjuring tricks and illusions, many of which were of his own contrivance. Whenever a conjuring entertainment, or a mechanical exhibition, was announced, he was sure to be one of the spectators, watching the performer, and studying the mechanism exhibited, with an intelligent attention which was seldom unrewarded. The feats of the Brothers Davenport,

differing as they did from everything of the kind which had been exhibited before, greatly interested him, and, when the Brothers visited Cheltenham, he was more puzzled by them than by anything which he had ever seen or heard of before. The part which he played in the detection of their attempts to humbug the public with their pretension to supernatural aid has been already related.

Convinced of the imposture, and impelled by a strong desire to vindicate himself, and to complete the unmasking of the Davenports, Mr. Maskelyne constructed a cabinet similar to theirs, practised their tricks, and, with the assistance of Mr. Cooke, now his partner in the conjuring entertainment presented at the Egyptian Hall, produced a complete exposition of the entire performance. Their first public exhibition proved an immense hit; the room was crowded and the notices of the local press were most favourable. Offers of lucrative engagements came to the new entertainers from all parts of the country, and they saw their way at once to a successful career. After much study, and many experiments, they produced their mysterious transformation scene, to which Mr. Maskelyne adapted some optical illusions and mechanical contrivances which had occupied much of his leisure while working at watchmaking; and this scene

has never failed to create the utmost astonishment, leading the Spiritualists to claim the conjurors as "mediums," and declare that their feats are performed by supernatural agency.

After performing before crowded and gratified auditories in the largest halls of the provincial towns, Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke brought their entertainment to the metropolis, locating it first at St. James's Hall, and afterwards at the Egyptian Hall. Having given their entertainment for so long a time in the metropolis, almost without a break, their programme has necessarily undergone many changes since it was first produced; but its leading feature has always been the exposure of the tricks and baseless pretensions of the Spiritualists. Tightly bound in their cabinet by gentlemen who volunteer from among the audience to ensure the security of the ropes and the unaltered condition of the knots, they have contrived to elude the vigilance of the watchers, and perplex all beholders, by the celerity with which they perform, by acknowledged trickery, all the feats which the so-called "mediums" accomplished, as they pretend, by supernatural aid.

Under the most stringent tests of sealed fastenings and flour held in his hands, Mr. Maskelyne contrives to remove his coat and vest, and throw them out of the cabinet, while the coat of any one

who may offer to assist in the performance appears suddenly on the back of the bound conjuror. How this is effected is a problem of exceedingly difficult solution. No less puzzling are the feats of Mr. Cooke, who, while apparently deprived of the power to move head, hand, or foot, drinks a glass of water, drives nails into wood, and cuts devices out of paper with a pair of scissors, completing the wonderment of the spectators by extricating himself from his bonds, and the meshes of a net in which he is enveloped, without the most astute beholder being able to suggest any feasible hint of the means by which the feat is accomplished.

The feature most recently introduced into their programme is the automaton whist-player, which is as far in advance of any similar piece of mechanism as their cabinet business is of the rope-tying tricks of Professor Redmond, exhibited several years ago at Astley's, and afterwards at the London Pavilion. Psycho, as this wonderful automaton has been named, is the joint invention of Mr. Maskelyne and Mr. John Algernon Clarke, and was first exhibited before the Prince of Wales and a party assembled at Sandringham, at the beginning of 1875. It is a figure twenty-two inches in height, habited in an Oriental costume, and sitting cross-legged upon a small box or pedestal; and, besides being too small

to contain a dwarf or a boy, may be inspected through openings in the body, and in the box upon which it is seated.

Mr. Maskelyne allows any person present to ascertain for himself that the narrow interior of the pedestal is filled with intricate machinery, and that no spaces about it, or the table upon which it stands, are hidden by mirrors, or other optical contrivances, as in the case of Mr. Stodare's sphinx. To convince the audience that the figure and its pedestal are perfectly isolated from any external control, Mr. Maskelyne places them upon a cylinder of thin transparent glass, which is submitted to the closest scrutiny before being set, and stands clear away from the curtained recess at the back, and from all the surroundings, in the centre of the stage. There is no attachment of any kind, the automaton standing free on the glass cylinder; and persons from the audience are allowed to watch as closely as possible around the figure while it is being exhibited, and to re-examine the interior when they please.

Under these stringent conditions, Psycho proceeds to exhibit his powers successively as an arithmetical calculator, a whist-player, and a conjuror. Any numbers proposed by the audience are added, subtracted, multiplied, or divided, with the readiness

and accuracy of a Zerah Colburn. The figure shows the product or remainder, as the case may be, one figure at a time, by opening a little door, and sliding the figure in front of the aperture by a movement of the left hand. All suspicion of confederacy or pre-arrangement is dispelled by the mode in which the result of the calculation is arrived at.

Any three gentlemen among the audience are then invited to step upon the platform, and play a game at whist with Psycho. They seat themselves at a side table, and proceed to cut for partners, and to deal the cards, those of the automaton being placed upright upon a quadrant holder, so as to be within the sweep of his right hand, with which, after surveying them with seeming intelligence, he lifts the card proper to be played, according to the circumstances of the game. He holds up each card that he plays in full view of the spectators, and then puts it down in front of the quadrant; and he will hold up any card as often as desired by any person among the audience. He shakes hands with his partner at the conclusion of the game, which, if he happens to have hands of average goodness dealt to himself and partner, he generally wins, unless matched against very scientific players.

A series of card tricks, performed by Psycho

under the strictest conditions, testify still further to the skill which has been displayed in the construction of the automaton, and in the concealment of the agency employed. On a card being drawn from the pack, the figure indicates the suit and rank, or number of spots, by striking a bell. On a card being privately marked, and the pack shuffled, it instantly finds the marked card, and holds it up, without, it would seem, the possibility of substitution or deception. The pack is shuffled again, and, while Mr. Maskelyne holds it behind him, in full view of the audience, Psycho names all the cards in succession, though the conjuror himself has not seen even the backs of them.

Psycho is, for the present, a puzzle to all who have witnessed the exhibition. The critic of the leading journal observes that it would be unsafe to predict how long the "dynamic mystery" will remain unsolved, in an age when the most extraordinary performances of conjurors are understood by many persons outside the profession; but he adds that "for complete novelty of the effects produced this new automaton outdoes everything which has appeared since the subtle inventions of Robert-Houdin." Another metropolitan critic remarks that, "unless the visitor to the Egyptian Hall can come to the desperate conclusion that Mr.

Maskelyne has gone beyond Professor Tyndall, and discovered the faculty of memory developed in the movements of clockwork, a problem is here submitted to the public which seems to be inexplicable."

Psycho is certainly as great a puzzle as Charles's invisible girl and Stodare's speaking head were before the construction of the former, and the optical deception of the latter, became known. Neither of these were automatic, however, and Psycho, as an automaton, far excels both Vaucanson's flute-player and Kempelen's chess-player. Vaucanson's automaton, which was exhibited before the French Academy of Sciences in 1738, imitated with marvellous exactitude the movements of the fingers, lips, and tongue of a human flutist, but, like a barrel-organ or a musical box, it executed only the particular airs which it was arranged to play. The powers of Psycho are not so limited, and its smallness precludes the possibility of such a deception as was practised by Kempelen, and the successive owners of the so-called automaton chess-player.

Mr. Maskelyne has received many communications, some illustrated by diagrams, as to the manner in which the effects are or might be produced; but he does not admit the soundness of

any of the theories which his correspondents have advanced. Professor Clifford, who enjoys a special reputation for ability in the solution of the problems involved in conjurors' tricks, and is said to have found out every one by which London audiences have been puzzled, has failed, I am informed, to elucidate the mystery of Psycho. Many other gentlemen of penetrative intellect, and conversant with physical and mechanical principles, have gone to the Egyptian Hall, and, after a keen scrutiny of the invention, have been equally unsuccessful.

An American gentleman, who had played a game with Psycho, and won it, though more intent on watching the glass cylinder than on his cards, left the Hall with the idea that he had found out the secret. The great care which Mr. Maskelyne takes to prove the complete isolation of the figure, so far as electrical force is concerned, by placing it on a glass cylinder had impressed him with the idea that therein was the secret involved. Glass is a non-conductor only in the same sense that air is, and neither can prevent the action of one magnet upon another. If an electro-magnet is brought into the vicinity of a ship's compass, it is not prevented from deflecting the needle from its northward direction by the fact that the two needles are encased in glass, or that a yard or more of atmosphere is between

them. If, therefore, a powerful magnet was fixed in the floor beneath Psycho, and connected by wires with a concealed operator, it would command the movements of a corresponding magnet in Psycho's machinery.

This ingenious gentleman visited the Egyptian Hall again, taking with him a small pocket-compass, and so certain did he feel that this must be the solution of the mystery that he had a plan ready for applying the test in such a manner as not to expose the conjuror's secret. Having ascertained the exact north point of the room, so that he might be able to discover any alteration that might take place when the magnet was brought close to the figure, he contrived to get his card conveyed to Mr. Maskelyne, with a request to be allowed to apply the magnet, and a promise that it should be done secretly. The permission was immediately given, in a public manner, and he stepped to the stage, and applied the needle to every part of the figure, then working. The needle was not agitated in the slightest degree, and the Psychic force remains as great a mystery as before.

Without attempting to solve this mystery, which is probably evolved from very simple means, I proceed to notice Dr. Lynn, who, for more than two years, has divided with Messrs. Maskelyne and

Cooke the attention of the wonder-seeking public. It has become somewhat difficult, after such a series of clever conjurors as we have seen since the advent of Anderson, for even the most ingenious of the profession to invent new tricks of a kind that will draw full houses for hundreds of nights; but Dr. Lynn has presented the cream of the entertainments of his predecessors, and some new combinations of old devices which have at least the appearance of novelty. The gold-fish trick, the second sight, the rope-tying feat, the decapitation, the instantaneous growth of flowers, the basket trick, and the aerial suspension are, as the reader has seen, none of them new; but Dr. Lynn is probably the only conjuror who has exhibited the whole of them, and he, besides, performs some of them in a manner which, like a new flower or ribbon on an old bonnet, gives them an air of freshness which they would not otherwise possess.

In the second-sight exhibition, Dr. Lynn reads any words written by a spectator in any language, however carefully they may be concealed from his scrutiny. He expands the decapitation trick into the so-called *palingenesia,* and performs the basket feat with two baskets, the young lady who assists in it passing from one to the other, unseen by the spectators, though they have an apparently full view

beneath and around the wicker appliances. The deception thus performed is certainly more puzzling than when conducted in the manner of Signor Rubini; but spectators may ask themselves why the young lady, if able to leave one basket unseen by the conjuror, should immediately enter another. The suspension trick differs from Mr. Silvester's only in being performed by two young ladies at the same time.

The *palingenesia*, which was introduced into Dr. Lynn's programme, in the autumn of 1874, consists in removing the left arm and left leg, and finally the head, of a man, the limbs being deposited upon a chair, and the head handed round by the conjuror in a black cloth. These successive operations are performed in a curtained recess, and the restoration is not effected in sight of the audience, the curtain being drawn, and the man walking round from the back. To London wonder-seekers this trick, however performed, is a novelty; but it was performed in India two or three centuries ago. The high-sounding name chosen by Dr. Lynn might be just as appropriately applied to the basket-trick, *genesia* being derived from *genesis*, signifying birth or creation. "And then, you see," as a punster observed in explanation of the word, "there is a *pal in.*"

The most remarkable feature of Dr. Lynn's entertainment is the corded box trick, in which a man, tied up in two sacks by a committee of gentlemen from the audience, not only extricates himself from them in a moment, but passes into a box secured with cord, and placed in another, also corded and locked, which is enclosed in a third box, secured in a similar manner. Almost as puzzling, though less novel, is the conjuror's modification of the rope-tying trick. A man is bound with copper wire to iron staples, firmly fixed in a stool. A curtain is then drawn around him, and a ring, previously examined by the committee, is no sooner thrown into the alcove than it is found on either of the bound arms, as the audience may select; while, though secured by ligatures less tractable than those used by the Brothers Davenport, the operator appears in an instant divested of his coat, and in another replaces it on his back, without giving the committee the least clue to the solution of the mystery.

Though his apparatus is less elaborate than that of Anderson and Robert-Houdin, Dr. Lynn does not agree with Frikell in discarding it altogether, and still less in the Finnish conjuror's disregard of the art of language. "He is," to quote the words of one of his London critics, "a most accomplished

master of the whole art of humbug, and he does his humbugging with such ease and neatness, such self-possession and invulnerable effrontery, that one must envy the man if he experiences only half the pleasure in cheating his audience that his audience does in being cheated. From the moment he comes to the front with his wand, this plump magician keeps the attention of all in the room enchained; his restless eyes sparkle from side to side, his nimble tongue patters with the rapidity of a Wheatstone transmitter, and his magpie fingers are diving into the secrets of unconscious pockets. There have been other wizards with powers as great, possibly greater, in their peculiar lines; but the speciality of Lynn, in which he excels all of them, is his marvellous talkee-talkee. He cracks a joke, tells an anecdote, or bandies repartee, always effective, and all this time he is working his wonders, for his running fire of remark is less to tickle the listeners than to divert their notice from the trick he is performing. He deludes the most watchful spectator all the while with his conversation, and, as he lucidly explains, 'that's how it's done.'"

There remains to be said only a few words concerning Professor de Vere, who, during the past summer, has been amusing, with his tricks of legerdemain, the thousands of visitors to Cremorne

Gardens. Mr. de Vere has for several years attended private parties in all parts of the kingdom, and given lessons in magic, besides manufacturing conjuring tricks and apparatus of every description, from the most simple deception of the drawing-room to the most elaborate and complex mechanism of the leading professors of the art. He gave his entertainment before the Prince of Wales on two occasions in 1865, twice before the Princess of Wales and a distinguished party in 1869, before several other members of the royal family at Windsor Castle in 1870, the Empress Eugénie and the Prince Imperial of France at Chislehurst in 1871, and the King of the Belgians and the Shah of Persia in 1873.

His continental engagements have ranged from the Théâtre de la Gaieté, Paris, and the Théâtre des Fantaisies Parisiennes, Brussels, to the Jardins des Eaux Minérales, St. Petersburg; and his programme, illustrated by M. Ernest Griset, has appended to it a testimonial from M. Offenbach, given at the termination of a three months' engagement at the Gaieté, then under that famous composer's direction. During the autumn of 1874, he made a professional tour through France and western Germany, varying his programme by the introduction of the aerial suspension trick, with chromatic lime light effects.

His repertory comprises many of the best tricks of the conjurors of the present day, and includes one of those anti-spiritualistic performances which antipathy to humbug has done so much to render popular of late years. The performer's wrists are securely fastened by two individuals from the audience to iron staples, the knots being sealed or sewn through as these volunteer assistants may require, and his feet are tied together at the ankles. While in this apparently helpless condition a series of bewildering effects are produced. A bell is rung, a handkerchief knotted, the performer's coat taken off, a glass of wine drank, a whistle and a tambourine played; finally, the performer disappears, and immediately shows himself in another place.

There seems no reason to suppose that conjuring entertainments of a high order, and conducted in a legitimate manner, will ever lose their popularity. Regarded with reverence and awe in the early ages of the world, as a being invested with supernatural power, and with fear and horror in after centuries as a wretch who had made a compact with Satan, it is only in comparatively recent times that the conjuror has taken his legitimate place as an entertainer. He is no longer exposed to the risk of being imprisoned as an impostor and a vagrant, as Katterfelto was at Shrewsbury; and it is only in

places remote from the centres of intelligence, and among the most ignorant of the people, that he is in any danger of such ludicrous, and yet unpleasant, adventures as befel Anderson on more than one occasion. And the more the progress of education and the development of the intellect enable all classes of the people to regard him in his legitimate character, the less tolerant will his auditors become of imposture, and the more will his ingenuity be tasked in the production of mysteries involving the application of the resources of physical and mechanical science. Future generations may continue to applaud the evolution of a globe of gold fish from a yard of black cloth, or the development of a geranium from a pot of earth under a hat; but the highest honours of the profession will be awarded to those who produce, in the best manner, illusions such as Silvester's ghost and Stodare's sphinx, or such marvellous examples of constructive ingenuity and skill as the automata exhibited by Jean Robert-Houdin and John Nevil Maskelyne.

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